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FRENCH ESSAYS AND PROFILES

FRENCH ESSAYS AND PROFILES

BY
STUART HENRY
AUTHOR OF "HOURS WITH FAMOUS PARISIANS,"
"VILLA ELSA," ETC.

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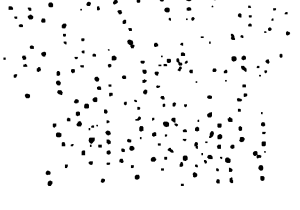

TO

THAT SEVERE AND AFFECTIONATE CRITIC

MY WIFE

NOTE

CERTAIN of these articles have appeared in *The Bookman* and *The Criterion* of New York and in *The Contemporary Review* and *St. James's Budget* of London.

Most of the subjects of the Profiles have been personal acquaintances of the author.

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ESSAYS

i. The Poetic Legacy of Leconte de Lisle

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

LECONTE DE LISLE was born in 1818 in the French Ile de la Réunion, east of Madagascar. He traveled in the Indies and settled in Paris in 1848. A pension and a cross of honor were soon given him by the French Empire for his literary work, though he had joined the Republican movement.

He dropped politics for literature, maintaining all the while a remarkably independent attitude, and soon became the leader of a new school called the Parnassian in recognition of its antique or classic types as contrasted with the Romantic which had been in vogue.

LECONTE DE LISLE was professedly hostile to modernity and to religion, and difficult in his relations with men. Hating women, he never married, yet held a salon. He was a stately and elegant figure of protest, cold in his disillusionment and skepticism. Yet his temperament of a grand or imposing nature attracted as well as dominated. He wrote and translated plays of the classic order which were presented, but his fame rests on the three volumes of verse with which the following essay deals: "Poèmes antiques" (1852), "Poèmes barbares" (1862), and "Poèmes tragiques" (1884). He was made a member of the Academy in 1886, replacing the dead Victor Hugo. He died in Paris in 1894.

FRENCH ESSAYS AND PROFILES

THE POETIC LEGACY OF LECONTE DE LISLE

HIS NATURE AND HIS EAST

IN so far as Leconte de Lisle is a philosopher, he appears to follow Alfred de Vigny among moderns, and to look upon the universe as a senseless, implacable spectacle which mocks at human joys and is dumb to human sufferings. This attitude is a feature of what is usually called his cult of the insensible. His longing to be absorbed into "the impassible beauty" of Nature, and to be consumed into "the eternal silence and oblivion of the stars," is a part of his dream of Nirvana. In some of his verse, however, he represents the vivified forms and moods of Nature which the Romantics had made familiar, and communes with, and draws solace from, landscape and sea. In "Juin" he says: "Perfume well the heart which is going to taste life; and dip it in the peace and the freshness of the skies. O Sun, pour thy flood of purple into the exhausted soul." Again in "Nox": "O seas, O dreaming forests, pious voices of the world, you have responded during my unfortunate days; you have

soothed my empty sadness; and in my heart also you sing forever!"

Many passages of like import are found where the poet treats Nature as a friend and a refuge. How then does he reconcile this with his dictum that Nature is cruelly impassive—that it "does not hear our cries of love and anathema"? The confusion appears to come from the fact that Nature reflects our own varying attitudes toward it—it is dumb to us, or a friendly solace, as we are dumb or friendly to it—and, too, from the general fact that, in his impassible moods, Leconte de Lisle contemplates it as it appears mutely en bloc and at a distance, while in his companionable moments he finds comfort in the appearances of the earth's surface close about him. In any event the poet's attitude toward Nature is incoherent, for he has unconsciously attempted to follow the cold dicta of Vigny and also the expanding sentiments of the Nature-loving Hugo—both and all formed into his Buddhist cult which therefore presents the incongruous creed of proclaiming the derisive muteness of sky and space, and of worshiping them, at the same time, as the balm for human woes.

It is for its ornamental beauty that Nature is almost incomparable in the pages of Leconte de Lisle. With the Vigny idea of it as an inanimate decoration, the poet composed all that verse wherein Nature is enameled with the splendor of the orient and the tropics; or is employed as an ornate background fit for the tragic stage of his epic verse, as in "Kaïn"; or is represented in dull, leaden wastes "marked with a sign of

wrath"—the commencement of the world's frozen death—as in his poems on the North. His domain of Nature is never meant to be French, and is employed by him mainly as a theme—avowedly exotic—to justify the display of his artistic love of grandeurs. Animals and the firmament are his favorite subjects. In this he follows Hugo—conspicuously so in his hankering for the animal kingdom. His verse descriptive of wild beasts is perhaps the most effective of all his poetry on Nature.

His universe is, for the most part, glazed, polychrome. Its dawns have "metallic lips," its waves are emerald, its clouds are bronze, just as on sceneries of porcelain. Action, gayety, perfume, color, perspective and the manifold beauties of real life and the real world are to be looked for here as if on Sèvres vases. And yet with all his patient toil on this rime and rhythm of enamel, you feel that he is, like Hugo, always magnificently out of doors and abroad in space. This is one of the two great features of his poetry on Nature. The other is that he makes the tropical sun burn intensely on his stanzas. The rays of *Sol* glint fiercely and gloriously on his chromatic wares.

We drift naturally here into his Eastern region. The descriptions of his Hindoo nature as seen in "Bhagavat," for instance, do not differ essentially from those usually found in his Greek verse; but in "Le Désert" and other poems, we have the true, vibrant, equatorial realm. Likewise, there may be found in his oriental verse types of women which resemble the Greek; and then there is his genuine,

tropical type as described in "Le Manchy." In "La Vérandah," one of his richest and truest lyric colorations, we have a Persian princess in all the elegance of a royal Iranian siesta. The incidents which afford him the opportunity of covering page after page with decorative verse are the simplest and most conventional imaginable. He is in no sense an inventor of tales nor an original observer and profound meditator on life and occurrences. As far as information, ideas and intimate knowledge of realities go, one seems to need scarcely more than a common encyclopedia in reading his verse; for he has employed the common stock of instruction and observation rather than relied on anything gleaned by himself from original and personal sources.

It is, however, to be emphasized that he was a savant. He was in reality an admirable scholar, and eminently so in comparison with his Romantic predecessors who were far from being erudite. But the point sought to be made is that Leconte de Lisle got everything at facile second hand. Although he was to some extent familiar with the East, most of his poetry (all of it, in fact, being written in France) bears the distinct mark of having been studied among the tropical life in the Jardin des Plantes, because he gives us the clear impression of having observed his animals a few feet away, like a sculptor of lions who scrutinizes his models in a cage. This, in its turn, has its interest and value, for while the Romantics beheld largely through their fancy, Leconte de Lisle strove for a closer reality

—a marked step in the evolution to Naturalism from imaginative Romanticism.

To continue to note the limitations of his East. We do not find in all this verse the description of a Hindoo temple, a bit of Himalayan scenery, a dancing girl writhing in soft clashes of pearls, a native custom nor a religious rite, nor anything to indicate that he has a special and exotic knowledge of his own. There is scarcely a line which hints that he was born on an isle in the Indian ocean, and spent the first twenty-five years of his life in the orient. There is nothing of the soft, subtle effect of night and devotional reclusion such as Brangwyn puts on canvases. There is nothing of the soul of Buddhist mysticism. All is hard, external, and, in a sense, formal and superficial. Granted that the epoch of Valmiki was, as Leconte de Lisle once declared, the equal and counterpart of that of Homer, how far he has come from initiating us into its secret and mysterious glories! It is as if he had been merely a voyager on southern seas and along eastern shores, stopping here and there at a port, and bringing away a general impression, like one who is on the outside of his topic.

In all these aspects one quickly realizes how little the poet has really said that is new and original in his barbaric pages, and how narrow their range is and incomplete their scope. His exteriority and artificiality, however, do not displease us here so much as in the themes with which we are more familiar and have an acquaintance of our own. For, in our comparative

ignorance of the Eastern realm, we look here for vague and general rather than particular impressions, and are not disappointed. Then, too, glittering conventionalities and idealizations are readily passed over on decorated surfaces so immense and brilliant as these.

Whence, therefore, the merit of this verse? It lies in its prism-changing immobility "which knows neither desires nor tears," in its fixed gloss and glamour, in its elegance whose rimes intercross like palms of gold. The flame and flare of the orient are upon this poetry. It is the tropical world of gigantic colors, of supreme passiveness, of splendid luxuries, and brutalities. It has the sense of immensity and the strength of contour; of glassy, solemn-faced inertia and melancholic stupidity. It represents a colossal ennui imprisoned in amazing robes of colored porcelain. Its very shortcomings, limitations and monotony are essential to its truly barbaric effect.

But all is not impassible in the verse of Leconte de Lisle. A part of it presents an exception to the above characterizations of his glazed Nature and his East. In some thirty of his one hundred and seventy-five poems, his physical and inner sensibilities and imagination are alive. Here he makes his verse live, and lives in his verse, in the manner of Hugo. "Les Jungles" is among these poems, and gives us a true sensation of that life wherein Nirvana begins on earth and all is "the shadow of a dream"; and where existence thins out into nothingness in heat-expanding immensities, and finally disappears in its own dimensions without bounds, like a ripple caused by a dropped pebble, to use the

poet's own simile. One feels here divinely absorbed out and up into the firmament, like a worshiper of Buddha. We realize the dreaminess of the Hindoo life in the poet's flat-nosed, world-sick bull, whose mournful bellow faintly echoes in our ears across sun-baked plains and lonesome, yawning centuries. It is in accordance with his contempt of human kind and his admiration of great beasts, as we shall see, that he makes his brutes, rather than his human beings, live and express his sensibilities and sentiments. Much less effective as a living picture is his "Le Manchy" with its maid than "Les Jungles" with its behemoth.

HIS PHILOSOPHY

In the main Leconte de Lisle seems to follow Vigny in holding that human existence is a "somber accident between two infinite states of unconsciousness." He considers life an affliction, since life is made up of ambition and passion; and he maintains that the business of man is to kill desire. At times, though, he is haunted with the fear that as the sun and the planets are destroyed only to produce new globes, so death is perhaps but a birth into a new life of struggle, in a long and slow—in an everlasting—evolution toward beatific extinction in Nirvana. The Ecclesiast has said: "A living dog is better than a dead lion. Except eating and drinking, all is but shadow and smoke. And the world is old, and the nothingness of living fills the black tomb. . . . Ancient lover of the sun, who thus dost groan, inevitable death is also a lie. Happy he

who might engulf himself into it in one bound! Always, forever, in the intoxication and the horror of immortality I listen, terrified, to the long roar of the eternal Life." And again, "I envy thee who, in the calm and black grave, art free of life, and no longer doth know the shame of thinking and the horror of being a man." Several years before the publication of the two poems here quoted from, Sully Prudhomme had given expression in his verse to his dread of being eternally a man —to his fear of immortality.

It is in the poem "La Maya" that Leconte de Lisle pictures his philosophic conception of the universe as nothing but a system of illusions: "Life is composed inexhaustibly of the whirlpool, without end, of vain appearances"; and yet in reality (for he was made up of contradictions) he treated the world, in general and particular, in a most concrete and intractable fashion.

He is, therefore, essentially Brahmanic or Buddhist in his views of life and death. He would ignore the existence of God and the soul, and any supernatural or mystic powers, as these terms are understood by the Christian world. In his eyes Christianity has availed nothing—indeed worse than nothing. "Where are the promised Gods?" he asks. "Time, O Nazarene, has accepted Thy challenge; two thousand years have sufficed to finish a God, and nothing has palpitated in his barren ashes." He holds that Christ was a despairing philosopher—one who uttered "a cry of distress for the last time." The dogmas and practices of the Catholic Church—Christianity—in the Middle Ages are held up in contempt and terror by him in scores of

pages. These were hideous centuries, he exclaims, "of faith, leprosy and famine, of the doctrine of eternal damnation, of Jacques Bonhomme in rags, of the persecution of the Jews and the Albigenses." He exposes to view the old-time cruelties of the Church and its cloistral systems of indolence and sensuality. In "Le Corbeau," a raven discourses on the futility of the deluge because of its failure to wipe life completely from the earth's surface. It is perhaps in "Kaïn" though that Leconte de Lisle shows most boldly his antagonistic attitude toward the scheme of Christianity—a scheme which, he would say, has troubled the world's repose and the serenity which the oriental religions had been cultivating from time immemorial. The poem represents the dream of Thogorma, son of Elam. It is the vision of Cain sleeping the sleep of centuries in his city of "Hénokhia." A cavalier, coming from across the plains, knocks at its gates and cries out: "Evil to thee, silent sleeper, vile flesh, man that the eternal vengeance has damned, thou who hast never believed, never hoped!"

Whereupon Cain, the Avenger, awakes and would justify himself, saying:—Thy assassin is the divine iniquity, not I. Jehovah blinded me with the fire of his wrath. I should have loved Eden, but I was disinherited from it before my time. I was born in a cry of horror in the brambles, and he who engendered me reproached me for having lived, and she who conceived me never smiled upon me. What wrong had I done? And I ask of the implacable Master, What care I for life at the price which thou sellest it? An angel

appeared to me and commanded me to pray and prostrate myself before this Master that I hate. I refused in my offended and tortured dignity, and he precipitated me into crime. And I prophesy that man, servile, mean, envious, will multiply after the flood; that God, jealous and lying, will demand of him to adore, and he will refuse. God will seek to destroy the human race, but I will resuscitate the submerged cities; and the little children of the avenged nations will laugh in their cradles, not knowing his name, for he will annihilate himself in his sterility.—

The one motto, then, which expresses the fundamental, all-absorbing idea around which groups the Buddhist cult of Leconte de Lisle is:—I hate life and all life! Passion, instinct, ambition, hope and everything that teases human action, should not (he declares) tempt him who is happily on the course toward impassibility, for they are all devices which end in grief and misery. Nature, he announces, is a decoration mutely scornful of us; man is a vile and empty coward, and woman is false; religions which inspire anything except the desire of annihilation and the practices of a resigned despair, are cruel deceptions.—

We are confronted, nevertheless, with all that verse wherein the poet drops his creed of the insensible and gives vent to the cries of his soul.

Is it not, one may ask, but the spectacle of his enthusiastic youth in conflict with his pessimistic maturity and old age? For he frequently refers to the happiness of his young years when all was the prospect of delight. He loved then, he says, the fierce war of

the seas, and knew the beauties of hope and the sensations of joy. Yet with the exception of the illusions of his youth, nothing ever seems to have afforded him satisfaction save the thought that there may be extinction in death. He exclaims in one poem: "The secret of life is in the closed tombs; that which no longer exists owes its state to its having existed; and the final nothingness of beings and things is the unique reason of their reality." "Nature will interrupt the din of humanity with one stroke," he affirms in "Solvet seclum." And it will not be when happiness is reconquered under magnificent skies. It will be when "the Globe with all which inhabits it, sterile block torn from its immense orbit, stupid, blind, filled with the last outcries . . . staves its old and miserable crust against some immobile universe."

In this wise his wrathful reproaches to fate, his despairful, depressing contemplations on human destiny, freely mingle with his cult of the impassible, with his religion of Nirvana. And all this storm and calm of pessimism are due to the fact, as he gives us to understand, that the ambitious desires of his youth have not been gratified. Yet, if we probe coldly to the naked truth, we can but find that he was a proud, disdainful soul, wrapped in a colossal egotism. And as he seemed as a poet to know only how to be ungracious, and to put his hand out in contempt against all men and things, he found, to speak in a crude way, all hands against him. For there is not a word in his poetry which discloses that he ever truly loved a person or was ever loved of any one. He does not offer an

exclamation of sympathy or tenderness. No sentence of his breathes a sweetness of heart or kindles a pity; nor does any of his verse give the feeling that it is the result of gentleness outraged, of self-sacrifice abused, of true nobility crushed down. If you have a sorrow, the comfort you get from his volumes must be strained out of the brutal response: "Why dost thou not die, then, miserable coward?"

Humanity, especially modern humanity, is characterized by him en bloc as a vulgar dolt, as a "ravenous plebeian." In our age, he proclaims, the muses are mocked, divine mendicants; evil is at its full; the air of the century is bad for the ulcerated minds; impure ugliness is the queen of the world. In short, he addresses to the nineteenth century his sonnet, "Aux Modernes" (1872): "Your brain is empty like your bosom . . . and drowned in the nothingness of supreme ennuis, you will stupidly die in filling your pockets." In face of this wholesale anathema, we have his most flattering and unreserved, though cold, tribute to those "modernes" who are called the Parisians. He says in "Le Sacre de Paris": "Star of nations, Paris! Nurse of the great dead and celebrated living, venerable in the face of jealous centuries . . . offer thy free glory and thy grand agony as an example to the universe." And, too, he lays an exalted tribute at the feet of Rome—Italy—in his poem "A l'Italie."

He therefore gives frank evidence, in spite of all his pessimism, that the human race, with its Rome and Paris, has not lived in vain since the days of the Greeks; nor is the future so empty as he would have us

believe, since he proclaims that France is at the helm of modern civilization. Evidently it never occurred to him to try to reconcile his cult of the impassible with his lofty laudations of Greece and Italy. Was it because Greece was grandly impassible that "her heart, overflowing with passions on fire," moves his raptures? Or was Rome nobly pursuing the insensible when she offered, as he says, the illustrious example to the world of her lacerated, palpitating bosom, and her lips of gold with their endless sob?

But it is not alone the disillusions of his young years that explain why he affected to curse and despise our century and all centuries since the Greek era. In his prefaces he gave another reason, namely, that poetry has not followed in the paths marked out by Homer, Æschylus and Sophocles. Since the day of Sophocles, he announced, decadence and barbarism have invaded the human mind and killed art. Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, had shown the force and height of their individual genius, yet their language and conceptions were barbaric. And he declared his special abhorrence of the modern poets—the Romantics—who aired their personal woes and love affairs in verse. All this, and much more, the poet came to acknowledge as nonsense by suppressing his prefaces from his later editions, and formally retracting their contents, in effect, in his eulogium of Victor Hugo before the Academy. For, on this occasion, after more than thirty years, he proclaimed Hugo—the incarnation of all that is barbarous and deplorable in poetry according to our poet's previous standards—the equal of Æschylus. As the

talents of Leconte de Lisle developed more and more exclusively into admitted non-Hellenic realms, he must certainly have recognized, after a time, that he had become professedly a barbarian himself and, as such, was responsible, so far as he well could be, for modern decadence, since he was infusing the barbaric into Greek ideals. And he may have come to perceive, too, that his achievements had been made possible by those very Romantic poets whom he was reacting against and despising, and that his poetic fortune was the product of their direct legacies.

Thus he sweeps away his own pessimistic dicta as often as he brings them to a practical and personal test, for it was during the siege of Paris that he wrote "Le Sacre de Paris," when the city was merely getting its just deserts, judged by the criteria with which he tested this "assassinating century." And it was in his discourse at the Academy that, after his numerous attempts to be received by those immortal "modernes" whom he was supposed to disdain, he returned thanks, in the form virtually of an encomium, to the modern world in general—the humor of which occasion was very properly seized by his recipient, Dumas the Younger.

One is left but to conclude that the poet's philosophy of life and his ideas in general are as contradictory and empty in vital essence, as confirmed by his own pen, as they are harsh and brutal in their elegance. He can be shown, in a score of ways, to stand conspicuously in his own light, with a certain naïveté or affectation as colossal as are his solemnity and autocracy. And yet,

s poets go, he must pass for an intellectual one, for, hile he is neither an original, complex nor subtle inker, he does reproduce phases of thought and gives marked intellectual cast to many of his poems; and e was an erudite. What one notes, however, is that ie French poet who is thus to be singled out specially s a savant, and who strove to introduce the intellec- ial into the realm of the poetic Muse, is perhaps far ss rational than any of his great confrères, as meas- red by modern standards.

He leaves us as unconcerned over his personal verse s over his enameled lyrics. As he has no sympathy or us, in his pachydermatous spleen, we have no sym- athy for his groans, nor any interest in nor serious spect for his ideas. They are both and all the roduct of an indolent, slow-moving, oriental tem- erament anchored in the Occident (a temperament hich tends to engender pessimistic disappointment in a egoistic soul), and they are born of one long, mmense huff of a really proud, defiant poet to whom lessings and honors came too slowly to gratify his mbitions. And yet, with all this mood of being out f joint with his time, and with all the affectation in is attitude and dogmatism, there was a kind of cour- ge and nobility in his example—that of an isolated id challenging personality, who appeared to ask no ivors of man or God, and granted none. This, gether with his barbaric spirit which belonged neither o our clime nor characteristically to our century, made m a figure truly and notably unique, and, in a sense, iblime, as he pulled back sullenly in the traces of

modern civilization. And as a result, his poetic product is, in a way, as striking an instance as Baudelaire's of the *héautontimorumenos*.

He has been called a "moderne" by contemporary French critics (in their reaction against the idea of their predecessors that he was a preterist), because he belongs to the modern school of pessimists, and is a logical link in the chain of later French thought. But this, while true in one view, seems only to confuse the meaning of things. It amounts to saying that he was a "moderne" because he was a preterist. Musset and Sully Prudhomme, for instance, are "modernes" because their poetic temperaments, sensibilities and themes belong to no age but our own. The ideals of Leconte de Lisle, on the contrary, are not in any sense inherent in our epoch—they do not distinguish it. His pessimism and orientalism are as old as history; and it was precisely by extolling the past and seeking to bury himself in it that he endeavored to react against modern ideas and tendencies.

And finally, to pass on, it is to be observed that he does not follow his own Buddhist creed and cult, for there is in his volume, as we have noted, nothing of that love and pity which made Gautama announce his doctrines to mankind. The poet lacks that atmosphere of infinite kindliness and of universal charity which diffuses a soft fragrance and comforting balm in Buddha's world. By contrast, we have in Leconte de Lisle an elegant epicure of brutality, a lover of the insensate luxury of harsh cruelties, the apostle of the barbaric deadening of the loftier instincts and of the deafening

of the finer voices of duty. One of the great and wise men of our era gave familiar expression to the modern impulse toward tolerance by saying that he did not know how to draw an indictment against a whole nation. Leconte de Lisle sought to draw an indictment against Man, Woman, Nature and God, in a heartless and sumptuous display of verse.

He, then, introduced to the realm of French poetry something of the Buddhist philosophy and scheme of life. In this he merely put a Hindoo garb around the pessimism of Vigny, only that he reversed the Vigny attitude by hating "the majesty of human sufferings" and worshiping implacable Nature and Space, whence the explanation that humanity, compared with Nature, occupies little place in his poetic output. In like manner, he gave a new dress to Baudelaire's theme of fatalistic heredity and to his black twisting demon of ennui, and also to Sully Prudhomme's thesis about the shuddering thought of immortality. He did cast the writings and tortures of the one, and the refined hyperesthesia of the other, in a barbaric calm and indifference—in a Buddhist impassibleness. To the love and concern of the Romantic school for frail humanity and its enthusiastic ephemeralities, he opposed the love and cult of the insensibly eternal and distant—of the inanimate things of beauty which give pleasure without pain, because they neither change nor die.

PHYSICAL AND INNER SENSIBILITIES

The poetic product, considered as one body, of Leconte de Lisle is like a behemoth lying in the sun, and giving once in a while an evidence of life. Here and there his verse shows a twitch of existence and a use of the sensory organs. Most of these awakenings of his physical sensibilities (observed in the thirty of his poems already referred to) are found in the middle portion of the "Barbares." His favorite way of making us perceive that his immobile beasts are living, is by referring to their occasional twinges of "comfort" or discomfort. He offers, too, here and there a glimpse of a lizard, hot with the fires of noon, his flight sparkling through red grass. In "Les Jungles" we feel the awful heat and torpor of noontide in India. In "Le Désert," a flaming, endless sky and plain are present to our consciousness. We hear now and then some lonesome beast's cry piercing the stillness of the night. At times one's sense of smell seems seized with a burning perfume or an aroma of "live flesh"; and in the last two lines of "Le Sommeil de Leïlah," our salivary glands are tempted.

It is thus, in brief moments and at long intervals, that we see, hear, feel, smell and taste in the verse of Leconte de Lisle. It is thus that his East, with its splendors of furnaced desert, of shining, hot, brass skies, of baked silence—in a word, the superb realm of the vertical sun—is reflected in certain of his poems. In this phase he merely extends Hugo's great world of physical sensibilities into the East, for Leconte de

Lisle, alone of the major French poets (if we except Baudelaire), has given us the feeling of the true tropics.

Following Hugo, too, he had a particular gift for immensity, and with it, naturally, a slowness and heaviness—his East is never light-winged nor swift. He gives us the sense of tremendous expanses across the earth's surface and space; he makes enormous bulls loom in his stanzas; magnificent carnivora haunt there, and huge birds wheel slowly in solitary flights—all adding a fitting notion of stolidity, *tedium vitæ* and brutish epic dimension, to the Bœotian inertia of his verse. In "Les Eléphants" there is a real and massive effect of a troop of monstrous elephants in the very act of unsettling the equilibrium of a desert and troubling the tranquil symmetries of its horizon. We seem conscious that these colossuses have passed by—that a gigantic mass has moved across the level of this poem, which begins and ends with the flatness and stillness of an infinite waste of sand. The sense of size and of outdoor immensity, and the effect of making the tropical sun burn in that portion of his verse which is vibrant, and scintillate on his enameled pages as if on glaring porcelain surfaces at noon—these, and these alone, are the commanding results which the physical sensibilities of Leconte de Lisle seem to offer.

His inner sensibilities are simple and primitive. His emotions are behemoth-like. They are apt to be aroused by the bellowings of bulls; for the poet says in "Les Bucoliastes": "Laugh of woman and song of lark at dawn are sounds soft to the ear and often desired; but nothing equals the amorous and sonorous

voice of a three-year-old bull that bellows across the meadows." This bovine sentimentality will appear ridiculous to the reader, but it is a logical part of the poet's adoration of beasts and his contempt for humankind. The roar of animals across lonesome wastes and down the silent depths of thick, tropical forests, and similar barbaric effects, awaken in him vague, elephantine regrets akin to purely physical sensibilities, and they produce the charm of his true barbaric disposition. For beasts, and for the vast, melancholic array of Eastern skies as they glow across the plains of his soul, the sufferings and tenderness of man, woman and child are disdained and ignored. These big-girted, almost inert, longings and mournfulnesses, together with his pessimistic hatreds and curses, comprise the sum and substance of the verse which his inner sensibilities genuinely inspire.

His women are either enameled objects suitable to his ornate and, therefore, sumptuous lyrics, or are lifeless, scenic forms, as in his epopees, or are fitted in a general way to an impersonal, insensible Muse. In a very few poems he gives the personal turn of a poetic lover to his verse, but this is always a patent conventionality. He seemed absolutely denuded of the true sentiment for living woman; and it was not a question of choice with him. The proof of his attempt and failure to be a love poet is seen in several poesies found in his early editions and since suppressed. Among them "Les Bois," for instance, is an illustration of the sheer commonplaceness he displayed when he attempted to be a sentimental lover.

This is not all. He affected to despise woman from principle as bitterly as Vigny—not, of course, the grand, impassible goddess types like the Venus of Melos or Hypatia, but woman who is the mother, sister, wife, daughter. He refers to the theme only in two brief expressions. One of them is a characterization of love as the "falsehood of a moment," and the other is: "Woman is much more bitter than the tomb." He discloses in "La Vipère" his inability, shared by certain of his confrères, to conceive of woman other than as one of two extremes: a lofty, non-existent type to be adored like a goddess of liberty —a white vision of a cold virgin; or a mere corporeal creature signifying that love is physical, and as such tends to baseness.

Woman, the living and spiritual companion of man, was unknown to Leconte de Lisle. There are his "Le Manchy" and several other poems where his physical view of her is, as it were, refined, idealized. But here she still exists only in the body, only by reason of her external charms, garb and surroundings: his conception of her is never relieved nor elevated by any of the mental, moral and soulful aspects which enter, in Sully Prudhomme, into her higher and truer realizations.

Hence he is by no means absolutely impassible, for, although he is not a poet of sensitive flesh and heart strings like Musset, he is not insensible like a stone. It was his aim to produce a decided degree of insensibility on the nerves of modern poetry. And so, whenever emotivity is set astir in his pages, it is that of a lower

order of life—of big animals or lazy Buddhist devotees. The charm of the slight phase of sentimentality in the last stanza of "Le Manchy," so much quoted to show that he is not impassible, lies in its exotic and immobile flavor, because it is a very primitive and formal type of sentiment for this modern epoch which excels in the complex, keen, and varied representations of emotional life.

Likewise, his art of verse is impersonal compared with that of Musset, yet it is by no means as impersonal as it would have been if he had only written in the style of his "Hypatie and Cyrille." His personality is revealed distinctly in his pages. Their comparative insensibility is his own comparative individual insensibility; and, too, he has not avoided the use of personal pronouns. But, taking his volumes as a whole, they make for impassibility in a most eminent degree: his great attempt, as represented by four-fifths of his poems, is to cap his nerves with the cement of indifference and "mute pride," and to let no humanity (to follow the hint of the famous line of Lamartine) beat under the thick coating, or shining scaly armor, of his verse.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY

Parnassianism, as illustrated in the main by Leconte de Lisle, tends to emasculate imagination, for it would deprive the imaginative of emotion. The decorative art, since it should present a certain evenness of surface, shuns the vivid employment of distance, perspective, heights and depths, and all the proper imagina-

tive effects. In "Kaïn" we observe the manner in which the imaginative quality is affected by the concern for decorative aims and for the technical coating of this verse. The flood scene in the last stanzas of the poem is an example of how factitious ornateness can destroy a dream. The same is true of Leconte de Lisle's lyric verse where his art is akin to that of enameling, as will be noted farther on. Glazed processes of all kinds necessarily chill and kill imagination and fancy because both are sacrificed to the prudence required by the mechanical necessities of the glazed art. It is for this reason that porcelain painting is largely confined to copyings. Fancy in Leconte de Lisle's pages, therefore, is neither creative, lively, gay, versatile nor feather-winged. It never captivates with sudden charm.

But to this general statement there is a grand exception which shows that he was endowed with, and could display magnificently, the imaginative faculty. The exception may be observed, as we have remarked, in about one-fifth of his verse where his emotions heave heavily, and the pageantries of the East pass into our souls. Here, with the aid of a carefully wrought style, he opened up for the imagination the colossal vision of the sun-burned tropics.

ARTISTIC AND ESTHETIC SENSIBILITIES

Leconte de Lisle's admiration of the inanimate universe is not a return to the Classic. It is merely Romanticism insensibilized and decorated, since the

Romantic love of the spectacle of the universe and of the exotic is the *fond* of his art. In this evolution from the Romantic to the artistic—to Parnassianism—his name is not chronologically the first one in France. The year his first volume appeared (1852) some of the "Emaux et Camées" of Gautier were put forth in book form. It was indeed Gautier who, in the verse which he had been publishing for twenty years, gave birth to the Parnassian idea; but as he was, in a sense, toyishly content with his tiny cameos and their exquisite impeccableness, it fell to the lot of Leconte de Lisle, with the East in his eyes, to lead the Parnassian school.

In inquiring briefly into the nature of his artistic and esthetic sensibilities as they are exhibited in his poetry, we should separate his verse into two general kinds: the epic and the lyric. His decorative epic verse is usually of the sort seen, for instance, in Cormon's "Cain" in the Luxembourg, or in Bonnat's fresco of St. Denis in the Pantheon. In the one case it is dryly effaced and sterilized; in the other it is characterized by bold, hard schemes of masses and colors, being full-bodied and solidly tangible. Since our poet exhibited a marked concern for the fabrication of verse, and, in his best examples, for the fine juxtaposition of elements that are congruous to his theme, it is his technically realistic and artistic processes which engage the main attention. He has the considerable honor of standing as the representative in poetry of all that latter-day French epic wherein the aim for scientific and esthetic truth dominates. In this treatment of

epopees he owes little if anything to Hugo, for the epic poetry of the latter is conceived and composed wholly on Romantic plans.

It was Hugo and not Leconte de Lisle, however, who introduced the epic Muse into modern French poetry, and fully developed it in various phases almost before Leconte de Lisle had published the "Antiques." For instance, there is Hugo's Napoleonic epic at its height in the "Expiation" (1852), while the epic in Leconte de Lisle did not evolve until several years after. The lyrical and descriptive verse came first in the development of his poetic talents. Hugo was the first modern French poet to write famous epopees, but those of Leconte de Lisle are of a different species.

His decorative art in its lyric form displays his love for Eastern ornament and elegance, for the enameled blaze of violent colorations. It has revealed a realm of flamboyant gorgeousness. This is proper to his barbaric theme, and one may well ask, What modern poet has given the world such a resplendent volume of oriental verse as the "Barbares," or indeed the "Tragiques"?

It is the fashion at present to offer wholesale praise of his erudite care for local color and for scientific and artistic truth, and he merits in these respects great tributes because of his influence and his achievements, in contrast with the ignorance of the Romantics. It should be pointed out, however, that his artistic processes and erudition are often false and unscientific, judged by the standards of to-day, when, grace to him as much as to any one, the world has become more

exacting in these matters. Take his use of colors. He does not always employ them with a knowledge of scientific values, and brings into barbaric and uneducated display hues which have no affinity for one another. Possibly he had this partially in mind when, as is reported, he very correctly referred to himself on one occasion as a "luministe" rather than a "coloriste." In other words, he is apt to employ tints like a decorator of porcelain. He will say, for instance: "All her charming body shines like a lily in the violets." Why *violettes?* Because it rimes with the *bandelettes.* Of course this produces a disagreeable effect on any one familiar with the values of color. Violet has no sympathy for the white of the lily or of flesh. The only excuse which may be offered is that he is not describing life here but a "medal."

We could easily show how he mixes the East into his Greece, and Greece into his North. Hydromel, rose-colors, naked women, laughing springtide nature, florid dawns, vermilion air, are frequently his material in his verse on the North. In "Christine," Septentrionality is only indicated in the "black pines." Otherwise the setting of the poem is austral. Elves are defined usually as northern sprites which are supposed to haunt hills and wild spots; but in his "Les Elfes" we have "prairie elves" dancing on a plain and crowned with thyme and marjoram which are not distinctly northern plants. The certain impuissance, or sterility, which reigns over so much of his verse is due, in part at least, to this hybridism. By contrast, the artistic and educated skill of Gautier, under all such tests, was

faultless so far as he went, for he was in reality an artist first and a poet afterward.

No, the rare value of the artistic and esthetic sensibilities, as displayed by Leconte de Lisle, lies elsewhere. It is to be found in the fact that he united emotion and imagination with mentality—the mentality which is shown by erudite and scientific groupings of verse. In Hugo we have the extreme where emotion and fancy—the vast and the vague—sweep over the artistic and the microscopically technical. In Gautier, there is the opposite extreme where the artistic, and the niceness of term, exclude almost all else. In his pages the clearness of contour destroys the expanse of fancy and reduces all to a miniature domain. But in the thirty poems of Leconte de Lisle to which we have been referring, we find a union of emotion and vision with regular and patient construction of verse. Here the immense spaces of a strong imagination are wedded to careful execution—the result giving precision of outline to sense of size. He falls short of Hugo for the one series of qualities, and does not equal Gautier for absolute impeccability as an artist; but he offers to the modern French Muse of poetry the first signal example of a *juste milieu*—a just middle ground.

Hereof consists the supreme interest of his artistic and esthetic rôle. It represents the blending in outdoor life of technical Naturalism, or Realism, with expanding Idealism. One feels that these pages reflect the true East, the real tropical sun, its genuine color, and that the poet has studied his animals from a near view with something of a realistic truth; and yet, at

the same time, he makes emphatically for Idealism in all its length and breadth, uniting therewith scholarly, artistic minuteness, general conformation to theme, scientific use of language. It is thus that he sought to wed reality with ideality. It may be called the marriage of science and poetry. The same is to be said, however, of Gautier, while noting that Gautier dwelt in the artistic domain and not in the veritable universe like Leconte de Lisle. The remark follows that it is in Parnassianism that the great modern realm of science, with its severe methods of observation and exactness, has made its impress on that of French poetry.

There are in Leconte de Lisle no Impressionist uses of hazes and fogginess—the effects of air which throw a sweetness, tenderness and mystery around themes. His penchant for the bold, brilliant sunlight close at hand was too great to permit this. But it may be said that, while the French Impressionist manipulations of light may be traced in poetry directly to Baudelaire in their shadowy and darker schemes—in their chiaroscuros—on the other hand, with respect to the Impressionist fondness for noon scenes and love of direct, vibrant sunlight, one finds perhaps a natural and original source in the effects of the blaze of the perpendicular sun in the verse of Leconte de Lisle. In comparison with him, Hugo's uses of sunlight, non-tropical as they naturally were, pale in intensity and splendor. But, nevertheless, back of both Baudelaire and Leconte de Lisle stood Hugo with his nights and his noons; and without this grand precursor, who

made all things possible to the modern French poet, neither Baudelaire nor Leconte de Lisle could have been what they are.

STYLE

It scarcely need be said that style in his pages is a sort of mechanical business wherein the *labor limæ* dominates over impulse and spontaneity. As a result, on the whole, his tropes are very commonplace and flatten out the sense and imagery. But it is, for this reason, rare indeed that a metaphor leads him into a rhetorical error as in the sixth stanza from the last in "Kaïn" where we have: "The sea went on, striding at one fold of its swell . . . the last cries." He displays force of style strikingly now and then as in the sonnet "Aux Modernes." In his decorative epic verse, as seen at its best in "Kaïn," there is a decided sense of strength; but herein he follows and does not greatly surpass Vigny. The verse in "Kaïn" is so factitious, so little possessed of vital vigor, that the strength it has seems that of a great bronze manikin. In effects of mere size, massiveness and expanse, he is unapproached by any of his confrères—always excepting, of course, Victor Hugo.

But it is to the quality of elegance that Leconte de Lisle gives greatest heed in his style. His style properly partakes of his artistic and barbaric temperament, and gives us displays of profuse gorgeousness rather than examples of finely discriminating choice and its refined chariness—that is to say, heaviness and stolidity

of adornment rather than delicacy, grace and variety. His rhetorical elegance, therefore, means especially a beautiful appearance, signifying that language is selected, as far as possible, for its richness of look and sound. And he succeeds perfectly in this wealth of enameled rime and glazed galore, as in the poem "La Vérandah" and many other poesies, where costly splendors reign in amazing realms of sumptuous glory. To turn an instant to his Hellenic world, it seems impossible to imagine a deeper crust of decorative Greek beauty laid on verse than in "Le Vase." In this domain of polychrome luster, Leconte de Lisle surpasses all French poets. Here lies his distinguishing triumph of style. His elegance would offset any disagreeable effect of the stereotyped processes of his lyric verse, and of the declamatory pose, stilted gesture, and empty colloquy which so freely haunt his epopees. His glazed art consists of the attachment to a set of rimes of a comely or gorgeous vocabulary which displays its uniform variety like a kaleidoscope.

We have all along referred to his language as enameled. This best describes the peculiar temper of his poetry taken as a whole, and especially of his lyric verse. His rime is usually spoken of as marmorean or bronze. It appears too scintillating and highly colored for bronze like that in "Les Destinées" of Vigny; nor does it suggest the light, clicking, marble blocks of Gautier's stanzas. But on the vases and paintings in the museum at Sèvres, one may trace out and feast his eyes on the glamored sceneries of Leconte de Lisle. His pages possess the glaze and radiance of enameled

porcelain. They are somehow inspissated and not translucent—they appear covered with an impermeable gloss. This corresponds to the concreteness of the sculpturesque style of Gautier—concreteness of style being a Parnassian trait. And there seems something peculiarly fitting in this firing process of verse-making when the theme is the burning East.

The decorative, ornate feature which dominates every other element of style in Leconte de Lisle is, then, substituted for those living, vivid, vital, powerful qualities which are the glory of Hugo. Words that burn the lips and thrill with keen life, verse that is a "living body," and all the highest-typed rhetorical gifts which distinguish the greatest poetry, are foreign as a whole to the art of Leconte de Lisle. His words in courting beauty court emptiness—a truly barbaric vacancy of look and hollowness of sound. Instinctive grace, flexibility, airiness, swiftness and the charm of the sudden and unexpected, as well as the great inspired Hugoesque qualities, are not native to the pen of Leconte de Lisle. His verse is static rather than in motion, dense not fragile, opaque not pellucid, vitreous or vitrified not ethereal, and seems incapable of a mellowing patina. His great and unique gift to the French language is seen, however, when we pose this question: Who before his day would ever have imagined that the French idiom could be made to reflect, with such wealth of broad, daring glare, the immense brilliancy and flaming prismatic colorations of the tropics? The "Barbares" are mirific pages of enameled magnificence, with here and there a heavy sign of a colossal life underneath.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

Looking at the poetic talent of Leconte de Lisle in its totality, one easily remarks how it is based on, and is a direct outgrowth of, the characteristics of the Romantic school. His East is a continuation of the oriental phase of Romanticism, and his dominating love of Nature is born of Victor Hugo. His Buddhism is a natural feature of his East, and is a pantheistic admiration of the impassible immensities of Space, quite akin to Hugo's commanding pantheistic admiration of the calm Firmament, but with the substitution of peace in Nirvana, as the ultimate expression of Space, for Hugo's peace on the bosom of God, as the ultimate expression of the Firmament. The inner and physical sensibilities and imagination of Leconte de Lisle, as displayed in that certain fraction of his poetry where he really gives the true force and glory to his East, are Hugo's own offspring in all that there is of native love of immensity, of fondness for huge beasts, and of other natural features. He continues the Romantic cult of environment, and exaggerates it to an extreme, since he confines himself almost wholly to it. His adoration of externals, of the universe, of the outward, and his comparative disregard of the inner world, are but duplications of Hugo's gifts for Nature, for contours, for that which is without, rather than for the study and portrayal of character, the penetration of the inward life, the conception of interesting and masterly personages. In all these latter phases Hugo

was weak, yet at the same time he loved and worshiped Man as well as Nature.

The point of departure of Leconte de Lisle from Romanticism, and the basis of his poetic art, lie fundamentally in his hate of Man and of the living sensibilities, and in his corresponding love of the artistic for its own impassible sake and domain. The key of his philosophy and Parnassianism is to be found in his famous "Midi": "Man, if you believe in and love the luxuries of joys and sorrows, flee the blazing noon, for Nature is empty and the Sun consumes—nothing lives here, nothing is sad or joyous. But if you are undeceived as to the vanities of life, and thirst to forget this agitated world, and wish, knowing neither how to pardon nor to curse, to taste a supreme and dejected voluptuousness, come and seek the Sun's blaze, for He will speak to you in sublime words. Absorb yourself in His implacable flamings!"

Thus as Hugo, in his tender love and pity of humanity, softens his pages with twilights, with evenings, with night and its starry firmament and the more reclusive, gentle, God-inspiring aspects and phases of Nature, as the fit accompaniment to the human joys and fears which fill his verse, so Leconte de Lisle, in his disdain of humankind, pours upon his poems the open, fierce, relentless blaze of the tropical sun, whose effect he rarely relieves and makes tender by dusks and shadows. This he converted into Parnassianism, to wit: the love of the eternal forms of beauty that do not fade, and the love of toil over the perfecting of elegant

verse. "La forme est tout, le fond n'est rien"—the form is everything, the content nothing—was a formula which, it is said, Leconte de Lisle often repeated; and herein he, for his part, illustrated a return from the Romantic, which was exotic to France, to the French love and talent for form and the artistic.

Again, he has shown how poetry can be a science as well as an art, and why a versemaker should be a man of culture and erudition, thus opposing the Romantic idea that poets should be children of Nature, depending on their own impulses and inspirations. He illustrates, in some thirty of his poems, the quite evenly balanced combination of living sensibilities and imagination on one hand and, on the other, purely artistic sensibilities and the severe mechanics of verse—truly a notable, a unique, performance, and one fraught with great benefits.

Furthermore, his poetry, which followed in the main the only new course left open after the Romantics, has exercised a strong and, in a way, very wholesome reaction against that Romanticism which drifted into hyperesthesia and loathsome Realism. And at the same time he displayed a brutality (excused in a measure by his elegant striving for the artistic) as pronounced as that of Baudelaire and the Realists.

We have merely tried in these pages to outline some of the reasons why the name of Leconte de Lisle is to be regarded as the most momentous one in the evolution of French poetry since the epoch that gave flight to the genius of Hugo, Lamartine and Musset—a name that stands for the Parnassian school as Hugo's stands

for the Romantic. It has not been the purpose here to attempt to expand the merits and revel in the glories of this Parnassianism; nor to show how this neutral conception of the poetic art, as a business of "regular toil," tends, with its almost exclusive regard for externals, to drag the poetic Muse down to artificial, imitative and non-individualistic processes.

We have noted how imitative Leconte de Lisle was. He partook freely of Hugo; found his ideas in his companion poets; came after Gautier in his theory and practice of the artistic and the love of the beautiful; paraphrased the Greek and Latin poets; and boldly imitated any one—even the unique powers of Baudelaire. His lines which are patterned after the fashion of Hugo are countless, and his style in a very general way finds a striking precedent in Vigny. In a word, as one who belongs to the Occident naturally conceives of all the sphere of grand poetry with its peerless peaks and ranges of human interest, he would seem justified in saying that the poetic product of Leconte de Lisle is to be compared with the total output of verse as is the art of porcelain painting with that of Rembrandt and Velazquez.

But if at times you weary of the fatigues and sorrows of being a mortal, and, following the precept of the "Midi," can barbarize yourself sufficiently to become buried for a time in a realm of Eastern and lonesome splendor whose very imperturbation and emptiness are a proud solace, bathe yourself for a half day in the tropical sun and strength of these calm pages of spacious verse, and, forgetting the agitations and sen-

sitiveness of weak human life and its petty ambitions, defeats, vanities, contemplate, in these exotic monotonies of immobile sky and desert, the glory of that which is implacably beautiful and does not suffer nor pass away. You will then have tasted a truly barbaric mood and a genuine poetic and esthetic pleasure. You will then have experienced something of the impassible and sumptuous absorption into the extinction of Nirvana.

ii. The Daughter of the French Romantics

THE DAUGHTER OF THE FRENCH ROMANTICS

MADAME MARIE MENNESSIER-NODIER

THE one great, soul-stirring date in the history of French letters is February 25, 1830. A brother of Hamlet and Faust was then born to France at the Théâtre Français—Hernani! At last emotion and imagination (which had given poetry to England and music to Germany) had seized the canvas of French literature and from their depths and heights of Mystery, of the Impossible and the pitifully Mortal, were massing and contrasting immense protrusions, perspectives and chiaroscuros of sentiment, tenderness and fantasy, where all had largely been grisailles, or hueless level surfaces decorated with a faultless and chilled technic.

The echoing horn of Hernani announced to the races of earth that French belles-lettres were now to inspire an interest magnificently human rather than mental and artistic. The young men and women of 1830, who, as M. Legouvé remarks, had a particular cachet as had the revolutionists of '89, are the first group of people in the Parisian humanities to step bodily out of their books, grasp us by the hand and say, "We too are of flesh and blood." They are not effaced per-

sonages eclipsed from their pages into imponderable, griseous, neutral entities, but are our own real brothers and sisters upon whom the word French does not inexorably stamp a nameless, alien meaning. For the volumes from their pens are our passing selves. Youth burns in them and Death trails his horror. Their stanzas and paragraphs sigh and cry out with frailty and sin. In them, illusion nurses longings for the unheard-of, and fancy paints the distant and exotic. In them, too, the sun shines, flowers breathe forth their perfumes, storms rage, and all nature, life, love, liberty, individuality stand forth in tremendous or in compassionate action. We do not approach these living authors merely to admire and acquire, for we cherish them with a vivifying affection because we are conscious that they suffered and died.

Thus the literary Anglo-American sojourner in France comes in time to feel for that famous old evening of Hernani a personal affection like that which always haunted the melancholy Gautier. It was then that Parisian literature became affianced, for a time at least, to our own, and throbbed with a heart that is our heart. Not only is it the one notable national date in late French letters: it is also the one notable international literary event, whose signification may not be fully interpreted until a century or more shall have passed.

But the Théâtre Français was only the scene of the dénouement. It is by no means there that the belated Romantic in Paris should love to linger for associations. His "château de souvenir" is not where Hernani fought

his fight in public, but it should be, specifically, the *room* where the revolutionary bandit of Victor Hugo was cradled in infancy and trained to grandiose adolescence. This room was the nursery of the French Romantics for six years, and their home for two decades, or until about 1844, when their reign had begun to close. It was the salon of Charles Nodier, and surpasses, for the value of its literary career and influence, perhaps any other French salon. Here was, in reality, "the grand *cénacle.*" Doubtless no room anywhere exists that can be compared with the Nodier parlor both for the number and fame of its literary friends and for its colossal impulse to letters and art. Here the Romantic French novel and conte found their first and most faithful devotees, and this was true also of the French Romantic Theater and school of painting and school of music with its Henri Reber and his Germanic melodies. Here, too, the modern French love for Gothic architecture was bred. And here modern French poetry soared in its fledgling flights.

It is quite surprising that this great salon is unheard of in America. While many books and essays are written by Americans on the French salons of previous centuries, none is penned on the salon of Charles Nodier in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Yet more about it can be known, for Parisian authors have paid tribute to it in scores of enthusiastic and lovely pages of verse and prose. It seems desirable, in consequence, that an attempt be made to remedy in part this lapse in our literary history.

So, if you wish to idle for a summer's day in this

Parisian domain of Romanticism, let us set off on a morning's quest of the Nodier parlor in its ancient quarter of Paris, and, leaving behind the rude noise and bustle of the boulevards, slip into the footsteps of its memories, and dream, in its haunts, of a glorious past. To find the room, we must hunt the rue de Sully —a certain lonely little street that lies between the Bastille and the eastern point of the Ile St. Louis. Its southern side is flanked by the monotonous façade of the grim-visaged Arsenal, an almost forgotten pile of the sixteenth century. Old fashioned bas-reliefs of angry-mouthed artillery pieces scowl at us from above its doors and carve their Latin inscriptions into our notice. Through the leafy tree-tops along the rear of the edifice, one catches glimpses of richly hewn mortars lining the heights of the cornice and belching forth their wealth of sculptured flame in a sumptuous display that recalls the ornate Renaissance front of the Hôtel de la Valette hard by.

The west pavilion of the Arsenal is regal because of its rôle in the life of Henry IV and Sully; for within it were restored, not many years ago, the king's cabinet and bedchamber known traditionally as the "cabinet of Sully." This apartment, where Henry loved to steal in peace from the din of his court, is of the most elaborate ornamentation, and is said to be perhaps the completest and finest specimen extant of the French interior decorative art of the seventeenth century. But we have not come to search a prince's nook, nor view a seat of royal games and acts, nor read the precious volumes of Henry's love letters to "Mon cher cœur" which he

carefully indited in his best hand with here and there an honest blot to show how, like some ardent schoolboy, he had screwed down over his pretty task. Nor have we strayed hither to see the old, bethumbed psalter of St. Louis, or the Terence of the duc de Berry, or the Bible of Charles V, or to visit the great yellow-volumed library of the Arsenal (the second largest bibliothèque in France) with its pungent smell of leather and its ten or fifteen habitués browsing drowsily over antique tomes.

We have come, instead, to open the fourth door of the façade, mount six steps, and then an ancient, abandoned stairway whose plain, forlorn majesty sweeps the dust of its oblivion into our clothes and thoughts at every turn. At the end of its first flight we open the door, walk in, and find ourselves in the quondam abode of the Nodier family.

We cannot do better than trace out the rooms and locate their former appointments with the aid of Amaury Duval, who was one of the most devoted guests here during all those years. Let us quote from his description of the Nodier soirées and comment as we edge along, so that we may have the former scene fully before our eyes.

"After traversing a rather narrow antechamber, one entered the large dining room. It was lighted by a little lamp placed on the stove."

This room is almost empty now. It faces north on the rue de Sully. Its walls are of wood carved in a kind of Louis XIV style, and were latterly painted a yellowish brown. Entering from the east, we see on

the opposite side the chimney recess where the stove stood. A bust of some abbé of local and modern note adorns the spot, for the rooms at present serve the needs of the Arsenal library. "It is here by the stove on a table near the wall that the guests left their hats, mantles, overcoats and umbrellas. Few of us could afford the luxury of a cab; but neither rain nor snow could keep away the charming young girls and their intrepid dancers." From the south side of the dining room "the guest walked through a little passage, came to the door of the salon, turned the knob as if he were at home—and entered." Here indeed is the selfsame corridor—small, dark, forsaken. We find the door knob and we, too, pass into the famous room.

At our right on the north side of the salon, on the panel that faced the windows, was placed above a canopy the portrait of Nodier by Guérin. In the northwest corner stood the statue of Henri IV as a child, molded after the original of Bosio. On the west side was the fireplace, with the fauteuil of baron Taylor, the founder of the Société des artistes, at the north end, and at the south end the armchair of Nodier, just in front of which was the "eternal card table." Then came the door to the chamber of Nodier, on the other side of which was his study adjoined in turn by a little room where books and various domestic things were stored. On the south side of the salon were the two immense windows reaching to the floor. They opened on a small iron balcony which looked out upon an arm of the Seine and the Ile Louvier. The wall between the windows was relieved by a Scottish landscape from

the brush of Regnier, a friend of the household. Underneath it was stationed a console supporting a plaster bust of Victor Hugo. Those who spun a conte, or distilled from their lips the dewy fervor of their verse, usually stood before the console, rubbing their backs unconsciously against the bust so that in time its nose became black. This discolored member was one of the familiar themes of amusement of the family and its intimates.

On the east side of the salon, and next to one of the windows, there was a door which opened into a kind of anteroom whence one entered the chamber of Madame Nodier. In the middle of the east wall there was the large recess which harbored the old-fashioned square piano. "The two paintings—the Regnier and the Guérin—were, together with a clock in the style of 1820, the only ornaments of this room. Its ancient and sculptured woodwork was painted white. The apparatus for lighting the room was as simple as the rest: two lamps on the chimney mantel and two Argand lamps flanking the Nodier portrait. I may add that these two Argands often gave Marie, the charming daughter of the house, occasion to mount lightly on a chair in the attempt to correct their capricious flames at the risk of disengaging a pretty foot to view." The upholstery of the six fauteuils and of the canopy was red cassimere, and the twilled, or double-milled, curtains of calico at the windows were also red. Thus the defiant color of Romanticism was contrasted against the peaceful, domestic background of the white walls.

Nowadays the apartment presents a wholly different

appearance. The walls are hidden by deep shelvings filled with volumes, and in the center there is an enormous, improvised stand, or table, whereon books and manuscripts lie strewn about. For, the room is now a part of the Arsenal Library proper, and is only known to the employees and to them very little. The apartment is about twenty-five feet square and the ceiling is some thirty feet high. The ceiling was much lower in the epoch of the Nodiers, for a false floor then cut the room horizontally into two unequal parts in order to form of the upper a mezzanine having chambers for Mademoiselle Marie and the servants. There remain to-day the white woodwork sculptured in Louis XV, the chimney place, and the polished old oak floor so intimately known for years to the feet of countless great personages.

The recess has disappeared, and with it, of course, the famous piano which Liszt was the first to open for Marie. All the furniture has long since strayed from these haunts. Some of it is still in the possession of the Mennessier family. They have, too, the Guérin portrait of Nodier. It is painted in the English style of this master's Chateaubriand and of the Lamartine of Decaisne, as if the subjects were Englishmen rather than Frenchmen. The six chairs and the bergère have been lost to trace, but the family have preserved unaltered the six fauteuils, and indulgently had one of them brought down one day from the attic to gratify my curiosity. It was an oak chair in the cut of the Empire, maintaining its imperial air despite dust and neglect. Its dark red upholstery was trimmed around

the borders with yellow stripes which were half torn off and dangling.

Through the windows of the Nodier salon we may saunter on the balcony where the melancholy Nodier used to sit and watch the sunsets bathe the neighboring towers of Notre Dame. The little branch of the Seine, the row of poplars along its bank, and the Ile Louvier have vanished, and now a spacious though quiet boulevard sweeps by. Beyond, through the trees, one spies extensive wood and coal yards. All this forms at present as lonesome a quarter as in the time of the Nodiers, but the scene was more poetic then. In those decades the mark of the country was upon the spot. Frogs croaked of summer evenings, the humid fragrance of idle water diffused a lazy dreaminess, and the surroundings had, as Madame Mennessier wrote in after years, "a rustic tint, both lonely and serene."

And the soirées! Only on Sundays did the family receive in the salon; on other days friends were invited into the chamber of Madame Nodier. On those celebrated Sunday evenings, Dumas the Elder tells us, conversation and recitations were the rule from eight until ten o'clock, and dancing and cards from ten until one. If Nodier arose and backed up to the fireplace, it meant a story. "Then," Dumas recounts, "we laughed in advance at the conte which was ready to come out of that mouth so ingeniously lined with fine mockeries. We grew silent, and there unrolled from his tongue one of the charming incidents of his youth—a tale that seemed a novel of Longus or an idyl of Theocritus. It was at once Walter Scott and Perrault.

. . . When done, Nodier let himself slip down softly into his big fauteuil, smiled, and turned to Lamartine or Hugo with: 'Enough of prose; some verse. Come! Come! Some verse!' One or other of the poets would rise and recite a poem while placing his hands on the back of his armchair, or squaring his shoulders against the paneling. The applause at an end, Marie sat down at the piano, and a brilliant fusée of notes broke forth upon the air. This was the signal for the contredanse. We ranged the chairs and fauteuils, the card players retired to the corners, and those who preferred to talk to Marie and not dance slipped into the alcove. Nodier was one of the first at the card table. From this moment he annihilated himself in his hand, and was completely forgotten. For a long period he would play only bataille, pretending to be of a superior force at this game; but at length he made a concession to the fashion of the day and patronized écarté."

One characteristic of the soirées is referred to by nearly every habitué who has written of them. Amaury Duval described it as follows: "A party of écarté (the stake never exceeded ten sous) took place in silence in a corner of the salon, and was interrupted only by the occasional loud cries of Nodier exclaiming against the bad luck which never failed to pursue him. About ten o'clock he would raise himself slowly out of his chair and disappear into his chamber through the door behind him. This room had no other entrance except from his study on the opposite side. After a few moments we saw Madame Nodier, with a warming-pan in hand, appear from the door of her chamber, and

traverse the groups of dancers on the way to the room of her husband. The contredanse stopped long enough to let her pass; and these tender, domestic attentions had nothing vulgar in our eyes."

Such were these evenings in their early and more famous period—from 1825 to about 1833. Sainte-Beuve said that they had "the atmosphere of poetry, of grace and of indulgence"; and Dumas the Elder thus recalled them: "Do you remember our Vigny who at that epoch, perhaps, anticipated his transfiguration but deigned yet to mix with men? Do you remember Lamartine standing before the fireplace and letting roll to our feet the harmonies of his verse? Do you remember Hugo as he looked at and listened to Lamartine? Hugo, alone among us, had the smile of equality on his lips. And all the while, Madame Hugo, playing with her beautiful hair, reclined under the canopy as if fatigued with the part of the glory which she sustained."

And Musset, for his part, picturesquely hit off the gatherings in the rue de Sully in blithe and well-known stanzas addressed to Nodier.

The charm of these soirées certainly lay in the youthful enthusiasm and admiration which every one here felt for the other. These were happy reunions of persons who were bound together by a common triumphant impulse, and who were immensely fond and proud of one another. It was this joyous ardor—the memories of which throb with a glorious exultation in the belated Romantic heart—that gave the fated "Classics" their cue to carom hopeless jests against the walls of the

Arsenal. Did not gossips describe these newfangled people in the rue de Sully as too gushing to praise Hugo's recitations of verse in ordinary terms such as—superb—magnificent? They could only punctuate his flights with such expressions as—Cathedral!—Ogive! —Pyramid of Egypt!

Of the soirées in their last decade a writer weaves this glimpse into our fancies: "Nodier invited me to his Sunday reunions, and I took care not to forget his invitation. Nothing could be more simple and cordial. They play, they sing, they even dance occasionally. Above all, they converse in a delightful fashion. Hugo, Lamartine and Musset passed along on that route and left a perfume of genius and poetry. But why search so far in the past? For Poetry herself is still there. She is Nodier's daughter, Marie—Madame Mennessier —who realizes for the pleasure of both eyes and ears all the grace and esprit of her father. Amaury Duval has just painted her portrait, yet it has not reproduced her charm. Painting alone cannot render it: it needs also to be interpreted by poetry and music—arts which she herself understands so well, for she writes winning verse and composes. Besides she has a magnificent contralto voice. One should hear her sing 'La Captive' of Hugo, the melody by Reber! I have not yet dared to approach her and talk with her for she is always surrounded with people. Her groups of young women and habitués are so gay and mirthful that they frighten my susceptible timidity. I converse only with Nodier, and with Madame Nodier who, also, has a great deal of esprit.

"The soirées doubtless were not what they had been ten or fifteen years before. The battle had been won. The chiefs had dispersed and rarely came to these Sunday reunions. Excepting the days of the ball, the gatherings were of an intimate character. I found there constantly the same faces of old and young friends. The older men collected around Nodier's card table; the young people formed a more animated circle around Madame Nodier and her winsome daughter, both of whom were escorted by a staff of young women as gay and spirituelles as themselves. Toward the end of the evening we grouped about the piano. Reber would play some of his compositions, or accompany Madame Mennessier as she sang one of his, or one of her own, melodies; for the daughter of Nodier had received at birth all gifts. Besides possessing an original beauty and an exceptional mind, she was an accomplished musician, and a poet like her father. At carnival tide the salon was transformed; they danced there in costumes of Mardi Gras. Nothing could be more inviting. I still see Dumas dancing vis-à-vis his young son who already was sparkling with wit."

How all literary and artistic France shone here in this salon! Not all, indeed, for Balzac and Gautier did not come to these soirées, although friends of the Nodier family; nor did Chateaubriand, Madame Récamier, Stendhal, George Sand, Chopin nor Heine. But we may paint in our fancies the pictures of the several groups that were wont to grace this room we are in and lend glory to its gayeties and intimacies. And in the foreground may be placed Victor Hugo, Lamar-

tine, Musset, Dumas the Elder, Sainte-Beuve, Delacroix, and Vigny.

Then there is to be added the rare cluster of amiable and lovely women! The most conspicuous among them was Madame Hugo, both by reason of her imposing beauty and of the celebrity of her husband, whose followers adored him as a veritable god. Other renowned figures in the scene were Madame Ségalas, the duchesse d'Abrantès, and the two leading French poetesses of the nineteenth century—Madame Tastu and Madame Desbordes-Valmore. And to grace the whole display were, of course, Madame Nodier and her daughter.

But, after all, those old soirées were scarcely more attractive than the simple family life of the Nodiers. Homespun, instinctive, whole-souled was its daily charm —a charm which was ever blending with that of the Sunday reunions too warmly and thoroughly to encourage the attempt to separate existence here into two distinct phases. How gratifying this impossibility to tell just where the domestic life ended and the salon life began, or, indeed, to say that there was aught but the first and that once a week it overflowed into the reception room! Dumas the Elder tells us of the daily manner in which dinner used to follow its informal course here:

"The family of Nodier consisted of his wife, his daughter and his sister-in-law. At six o'clock the table was spread. To the plates for the family three or four were added for the regular guests. Once admitted into the amiable intimacy of the household, you went

there to dine whenever you pleased. If two or three plates had to be arranged, they were arranged; if the table had to be lengthened, it was lengthened. And woe to him who entered and made the thirteenth, for he was mercilessly forced to eat at a little side table, unless by chance another diner came and released him from exile.

"I was soon one of the intimates of the house, and my seat at table was once for all fixed between Madame Nodier and Marie. When I appeared at the door, I was received with cries of joy, and every one seized me by the hands and welcomed me. At the end of a year, that which was only a fact became a right. My chair was kept vacant for me until the first courses were removed, when the giving of it was hazarded to another; but he who filled it always relinquished it to me even if I did not reach the Arsenal until dessert. . . . Thus we arrived at the end of a charming dinner where all accidents, save bread placed wrong side up, were taken philosophically. . . . Then Madame Nodier rose and went to light the salon. As I did not drink coffee, I often accompanied her, and my height was of great service to her in lighting the lamps."

Madame Hugo gives us this description of Nodier and his wife and their daily life: "Nodier was usually to be found in his wife's chamber, where he received his friends after dinner with a luminous smile on his hollow cheeks. It was a simple room, waxed and shiny, with some portraits on the walls. One entered as if he were at home, Nodier not rising from his chair. His wearied body was half doubled up and his long

legs crossed as if they dared not separate. His trousers did not reach his feet; his arms were as fatigued as his body; and his hands were thin, cold and discolored. And from this lank figure, this awkwardness, this negligence, there disengaged an inexplicable charm. This immense spider spun an invisible web wherein all people, from children to grand poets, were caught: it was his grace.

"Sitting vis-à-vis Nodier was Madame Nodier, with her dainty feet half escaping from under her gown. Easy of approach, winning, smiling for her pretty teeth, she received every one with equal pleasure. She never disclosed any vanity of social distinction nor of personal merit. She gave her illustrious guests none of those noisy attentions which are injurious to the humbler visitors. Her face, alert and radiant like a bouquet, enlivened and refreshed one's sight. Her compact beauty, scrupulous toilet, neat intelligence, corrected and completed the general laisser-aller of Nodier. It was an admirable example of precision by the side of nonchalance.

"One was fortunate indeed to find Nodier talking—no one will ever talk like him. When he was not in a conversational humor, Madame Nodier supplied his place. Ordinarily the tone of the conversation at the Arsenal was rather lively than grave. Entrain, levity, gayety prevailed. One chatted about his neighbors, but without any ill-will or passion. Criticism did not go beyond raillery. Madame Nodier excelled in these delicate mockeries, yet those she loved the most she treated the worst with her tongue. Sensible and posi-

tive, she was prompt to seize the ridiculous side of people, for one is only ridiculous when he goes beyond the truth. The tranquillity and slowness of her accent gave piquancy to the original tournure of her remarks.

"In his stories Nodier always made himself small, unsuccessful, pitiably winked out. This trait was, in fact, a trait of his character. In his habits he sought to be humble, plain, bourgeois. He wanted to use candles, and would have preferred tinplate to silver ware. He only liked brown bread and cabbage soup. Pomp importuned him. He never desired to go to the Opera or the Français. On the other hand, he never wanted to come away from the Variétés, and was the friend of all the clowns and merrymakers. His literary enthusiasms were reserved for a company of anonymous great men and obscure geniuses whom he pretended to have unearthed. He did not appear to appreciate very much the true thinkers who have honored our century. In any one else this would have passed for envy, but with him it was rather the inability to support too strong a light—a weakness of 'morale' eyelid. It was the love of darkness and twilight, an instinctive embarrassment, a discreet pudency. Universal, celebrated minds produced on him the effect of full suns and public squares. He felt ill at ease, as if too conspicuous amid such vast glory. He tried to be infant, people, populace. He hated action and responsibility. New things, discoveries, industrial progress, he little welcomed. He abhorred railroads. He had the popular superstitions. Thirteen at table, saltcellars upset, Friday, spiders—all were important subjects of terror at the Arsenal."

Madame Nodier was assuredly a true literary helpmeet of her husband. He submitted most of his pages to her before their publication. A contemporary recalls her fondness for the theater and her slight love for toilets of ceremony; while to the eyes of another friend she was "that angelic woman who succeeded in regulating Nodier's stormy life: in communicating the calm and serenity of a beautiful soul to a soul troubled and beaten down."

Dumas the Elder tells us this of Nodier (the two formed a unique pair and were perfectly mated): "Nodier was a lovable man, without a vice, but full of faults—of those charming faults which make up the originality of a man of genius. He was prodigal, careless, a lounger like the lazy Figaro—that is to say, a lounger with delight. His dominant shortcoming, in the eyes of Madame Nodier at least, was his bibliomania—a fault which was the joy of Nodier and the despair of his wife." And Dumas could go on by the hour, in his amusing, inimitable way, with the history of Nodier's practical joke on a naïve friend who was induced to scour the earth for a certain edition, which never existed, of the Bible; with the account of Nodier's frequent views of the wandering Jew; with the story of his having invented and baptized a marvelous animal which he called the taratantaleo; with the description of the toad five inches long and three inches wide which he pretended to have dug up in Styria; with the tale of the toad and the spider which inhabited the crypt in an unknown church in Normandy, and lived from day to day by sucking the oil out of the

lamp precisely at midnight; and with legends of the sundry varieties of despised fauna which Nodier and his companions caged for the menagerie of Romantic literature.

Nodier's tall, lean homeliness, his melancholy, his habit of telling stories, make him seem to us now a kind of Abraham Lincoln. He was the most generally and genuinely liked of all the men of French letters of his time, unless indeed it was Béranger. He lived here without an enemy in the very midst, and through the whole, of the storm and stress period of modern French letters. Every book that had a preface by him was sure of success. "The chief trait of Nodier, his true gift," another friend (Sainte-Beuve) remarks, "was to be inevitably loved. . . . He was to chance-coming poets the elder brother, the bosom comrade, a comrade generous, charming, enthusiastic, encouraging, disinterested, and often in his heart the youngest and most tender of them all." Of the lovable nature of his humor we always recall this sample, which reveals at once so much of his character. To a disciple, who on one occasion had written something fashioned in Nodier's style and had submitted it to him for his opinion, Nodier said: "My friend, I fear this cannot be particularly good, for at first I thought it was my own."

He was a true Romantic in reality, and his youth and young manhood had been full of romanesque adventure and experience, as may be seen from the Cherubin incident. His daughter recounts that Nodier, at the age of ten, fell desperately in love with the most beautiful lady in his native town—Besançon. So consumed was

he by his passion for this angel of loveliness that he finally contrived to pour out his fervor in a billet-doux, revealing to her the dolorous condition of his heart and praying for a rendezvous. To his delight he received a prompt response in which the lady—a baroness, forsooth—promised to be found in the park at eve. Could lover's wishes be more perfectly favored? The lad repaired in breathless rapture to the blissful spot, and, as soon as he perceived a vision of white lace through the twilight and foliage, rushed forward and began to kneel in a confused outburst of immortal ardor. But imagine the mortifying ending! Her two adorable, pearly hands caught possession of him and, pitiable to relate, detailed the most humiliating of maternal punishments—he was breezily spanked! To the chagrin of this event Nodier ascribed his timidity, and said he never approached a woman in his life without fearing that he was going to be whipped. It was this love of the unattainable and impracticable, this sad sentimentality, which Hugo sings of in a well-known Ballad apropos of his friend.

Nodier was virtually a Royalist, yet it appears that "he never had a political opinion. Ever searching the dramatic and the beautiful, he adopted successively all the defeated causes and parties, claiming that they were the most apt to be the nearest right." In literary composition he was a purist whom the anti-Romantic Academy of that day seemed glad to honor by making him one of its own. "Nodier is the last writer who can be attached to the traditions of the grand century of Louis XIV for purity of taste and delicacy of language.

. . . His last words, vaguely addressed on his death bed to some unknown person, were: 'Read Tacitus often and Fénelon—to lend more assurance to your style.' "

Thus Nodier held a unique and multiform place in the Parisian literary world of his time. As a member of the Institute because of his love for the traditional French idiom, he diffused the Academic influence—that "defunct" something which Gautier's old "Philistines" were feebly trying to preserve by various processes of mummification. The Royalism of Nodier had given him the directorship of the Library here in the rue de Sully, and he therefore had the standing of an official and adherent of the Government. At the same time, however, he was the acknowledged patron—the "father"—of the French Romantic school. His vivid imagination and consequent fondness for the curious and the fantastic, and his profoundly emotional nature, bound the young Romantics to him by the closest ties. An adequate explanation of his peculiar and important rôle with respect to them will be forthcoming when the mystery of the union of the bourgeois and the Bohemian in the French Romantic school shall have been thoroughly examined and understood. For Nodier was a sort of Bohemian developed into the faithfulest of husbands; and the Bohemians of art and literature entered perfectly at ease into his bourgeois salon.

As a man of caprice, of bizarre fantasies, of an immense liberality and laisser-aller, he attracted the confidence and respect of the youths of the day—all those callow fellows of Bohemian atéliers and holes-in-the-

wall who wore Carolingian locks and tremendous trousers and who had decided to upset the world, but whom people in general shook their heads at and said, "They are fools." And as a home-dwelling man attached to his hearthstone and to his wife and daughter, and who loved as his favorite flower the common columbine as Rousseau had loved the common periwinkle, Nodier spread about him a stronger and directer moral influence than any one of the new school. From his fireside here where we stand, there were reflected that domestic and bourgeois warmth and color which for the first time were mixing into French prose and verse and were in part to characterize the Romantic literature of France.

But, before thinking of the rôle of the Nodier salon, one should know of the young woman who was so richly the excuse of its delicious renown. Marie-Antoinette-Elizabeth Nodier was the only child of Charles Nodier. Born in 1811, she undoubtedly proved, on the whole, the chief attraction here at the Arsenal, whether as a girl, or after 1830, as the wife of M. Mennessier. We have already caught a glimpse of her as she appeared to the eyes of a young author in 1840. Sainte-Beuve used to think of Marie as Nodier's "charming daughter, his most faithful image, his most finished work of grace." Another writer describes her as "his (Nodier's) daughter, in whom he saw reflower his esprit and a part of his talent." Still another tells us that "few young girls have had, as much as Marie, that joyous verve which seems to say: I am happy to be living."

And this is Madame Hugo's tribute poured out with he enthusiasm of her great affection for her young riend: "Madame Mennessier was youth, life, movenent, the sparkle of eye, of gesture, of phrase. And vith this, an exquisite tact, an extraordinary moderaion, an incredible understanding of all things in life rom the largest to the smallest. She had an unheardf skill in taking advantage of everything and in exloiting everything—a chiffon as well as a repartee. he made duchesses envious in dresses that a chambernaid would have disdained. The linen at her wrist as more precious than the lace at the wrists of others. he set off her robes—her ribbons had esprit."

And the poets sang of her in a chorus of praise. adame Tastu addressed verse to the black eyes of arie—a curious error, we may note in passing, for r eyes were not dark. Musset paid homage to her te coquette et fleurie," to her purple lips, to her soling hands "so sage and so gentle," and to her dness and beauty. And all who are lovers of the e of Victor Hugo will recall two flying leaves which ddressed to her and inserted among his "Feuilles tomne."

pass from verse to colors and canvas, we must to a close our morning here in the Arsenal, and r the afternoon to what was a certain quiet parhe salon of the daughters of Madame Mennesn a beautiful village outside the southern fortis of Paris. For in this room we could linger at er the copy of Devéria's aquarelle of Marie It is dated 1829. The original is apparently

lost. Devéria painted the hours in aquarelles and Marie Nodier represented the tenth hour of the evening. She is portrayed in full toilet and in a loge at the opera. Her robe is pale blue; the slope of her shoulders is prolonged in great flying puffs; her head, like that of a Greek goddess, is set gracefully forward to give full value to the lines that curve up to it. Her hair is twirled ambitiously skyward in an immense coiffure decked with extravagant features. The profile of her small round face is that of an ingénue; but the tournure of her pose invites our communicative interest, and promises a gay, cordial young woman who has the gift of conversing and the ease of entertainment.

Here, too, in this salon could be seen her celebrated portrait by Amaury Duval. It was executed in 1839 when she was twenty-eight years old, and has had the strange fate of always pleasing her family and never her friends. Gautier, in his half Bohemian way, used to say of it and of the artist: "Is it necessary for him to be maladroit? There are three hours every day during which she is less ugly than that. He should have chosen them."

The portrait, despite its deadness of color and a certain artificiality in handling, is on the whole very satisfactory. It is life size. Madame Mennessier here appears in a black, décolletée robe with short sleeves. Her jet black hair comes compactly down over her temples. The nose has an accent of broadness, and the face is squarish, and is overspread as if with the subdued radiance of a youthful motherhood. Her left arm hangs gracefully forward over an arm of the

fauteuil. Her right hand gently supports her chin and cheek. The whole attitude indicates the ready conversationalist. This effect is heightened wonderfully by the expression of the eyes which, to her family, seem perfectly reproduced. The skill of the painter was here at its best. We love to regard her two grayish-green eyes that bead, in this canvas, with twinkling life, and look straight at us with a frank amiability, telling us that their owner was quick to share a sportive hour, or a serious, comfort-needing mood. They speak of an indescribable mixture of gayety, affection, discretion, and we forget that they are only in a picture. One realizes that there exhales from this canvas a woman's lovely dignity and a genial vivacity—the two prevailing perfumes in the sachet of her personality.

She had a bright tongue, yet her full-beating heart was heard in still distincter messages. She spread about her the charm of a cheerful sympathy, a warm comradeship. And as the background for all this, there was her domesticity. What gifts and culture she was graced of were mellowed by her tender, homelike nature. We do not doubt it was rather for her than even for Nodier himself that those younger Romantics kept coming to the Arsenal. In her they found a sweet, fair-eyed friend, who was enthusiastic for them and proud of them, and to whom it was a genuine pleasure to offer their verses and designs. With her they could talk and sing and dance. They could have at the Arsenal something of a free intercourse with a maiden who was exemplifying before their very eyes that womanly purity, emotivity and fireside happiness which

many of them, leading Bohemian careers adrift in undomestic Paris, could otherwise dream of only in rimes and colors and contours.

This atmosphere inspired them with confidence and self-respect, with the crowning promises of utmost effort and of temperate, moral living—all those virtues for which the rôle of the Nodier salon is to be remarked, and to which the daughter of the house contributed her full and essential part. Surely no other young woman of that epoch diffused among the youthful companions and followers of Victor Hugo such an influence as hers, either in quality or degree. For we cannot think, in this connection, of Madame Récamier nor George Sand.

The favorite flower of Madame Mennessier was the honeysuckle; and those familiar with the lives of the French Romantics are not surprised that she disliked having flowers about her in the house. She could not bear to see them wither and die, and therefore rarely plucked a rose or grouped a bouquet. It is interesting, too, to learn that during her last years she always sat by a window which faced the little stony main street of her village, instead of by one of the windows which looked out over a pretty garden and across the picturesque valley of the Bièvre. The homely street and its humble life were company for one who had been surrounded for years by so many brilliant friends. The landscape was too lonely and pensive for her.

She read much, and the poets of her heart were Lamartine and Musset. Among novelists, she preferred Dumas and Octave Feuillet. The novels of George

Sand she did not care for and scarcely had ever fingered through one of them.

It is natural to conclude that her gift of making herself universally loved, of effacing herself before her companions, accounts for her failure to contribute anything notable to art or literature. She was endowed with talents, but she cultivated them modestly and only for her friends and household. She seemed to have no dreams of ambition save for those about her. Her joyous neglect of self doubtless often impressed her friends with the thought of what she might have done, had she not been content to remain simply a delightful inspiration to others; for, as it is, extravagant are the laudations that have come down to us of her music, her verse and her esprit. Everlasting is the praise; ephemeral was its theme.

At conversing she must have been remarkably adept in the sense of being irresistibly gay and entertaining. We saw how her portraits speak the conversationalist. Those who knew her in her prime say that one can scarcely form an idea of her entrain when she found some one who was good at repartee and could give quick and salient replies. That such friends and acquaintances were in no respect lacking we are offered abundant proof, for the bourgeois circle at the Arsenal was surely as successful a company of famous conversers and story-tellers as ever came habitually together even in France. Did not the July Monarchy prove that the gift of esprit was not confined, among the French, to the aristocracy and the populace? Louis Philippe, the only bourgeois ruler the greater France has had, ap-

pears to have been precisely its wittiest monarch.

Madame Mennessier was very musical and music-loving. At the piano she was contented with accompaniments and the little contredanses and waltzes that punctuated and modulated the dancing at the soirées. A friend of hers tells us that Marie Nodier sang three decades before Gounod that which this master has since sung. There is a significant undertone of truth in the above; for the noteworthy, if not notable, trait in Madame Mennessier was her heartfelt color of sentiment; and it is this that Gounod has woven into music in a more eminent degree than any French composer. She wrote countless songs. She wedded to melody much of Musset's verse and some of Sainte-Beuve and of Victor Hugo. Here in the silence of her parlor we could rove through a pile of her scores. They are neatly penned; the paper is yellow with age and finger-soiled. The melodies are very modest and are chaperoned by the plainest of correct accompaniments, for she knew nothing of modern harmony. Her songs are completely forgotten, yet for years they were not without a certain fame throughout all Paris.

Her writings consist of a few contes, of "Lettres d'une hirondelle," of her book "Charles Nodier," and of verses. Her unpretending poetic talent may be found at its best by far in the two sonnets which she addressed to Musset under the circumstances revealed by a friend. He recounts:

"One day in the spring of 1843, I brought some verse to Nodier and among it there was a sonnet to Musset. 'Leave this one with me,' he said, 'it may

render us real service. For sometime past Musset has neglected us and appears to forget us. Your sonnet may bring him back to us. My daughter will send it to him, and the ungrateful fellow must come down here and tell us why he is in the sulks.' Madame Mennessier at once sent the sonnet to Musset with a letter of the kind she knew how to write, and the next day I received a note from him thanking me for my poetry and excusing himself from answering in verse—that language, he delicately added, which I understood so well how to use. Of what does glory consist? If he had addressed me in rime, I should have been celebrated. In any event my sonnet had awakened him. He hastened to the Arsenal, saw his two friends, and, the following day, thanked Madame Mennessier in a sonnet for her amiable appeal. She responded in the same form. Musset replied in verse the same day. In short, during three days there was a rapid exchange of rime between the two poets who had been friends from childhood."

Musset himself paid these sonnets of hers a frank compliment in writing his brother at the time: "I have also done several sonnets for Madame Mennessier, who sent me in response two very pretty ones."

No, and nevertheless, Madame Mennessier is scarcely for an instant to be remembered for what she created, though she will be immortal for what she inspired. It would be idle for one to attempt to enumerate the canvases and the musical scores that lauded her charms, and the countless minor or casual tributes that were paid her in rime. We are curious to learn, though,

that she had two albums—one as a girl, the other as a young married woman. The latter, containing the Arvers sonnet, I never saw for it was en province. But in the former the present writer found that the opening tribute, dated Nov. 16, 1824, was by Lamartine. It consists of six lines written in a small, neat, but yet not very legible style, in the upper right hand corner of the first page.

In this album, too, were stanzas by the elder Dumas, Vigny and Victor Hugo. The Dumas verses are penned with the greatest of care in a minute yet clear hand. They are impeccably aligned, showing that he wrote them along the edge of a sheet of paper or a ruler. He was then twenty-one.

Madame Mennessier unquestionably inspired more of imperishable verse than any other French woman. Besides the three sonnets of Musset to which we have referred, he dedicated to her some well-known lines as a tribute to her for having interpreted in music some of his rimes. Victor Hugo composed as many stanzas in her honor as Musset.

But the most memorable of the verse which Madame Mennessier called forth was the sonnet of Arvers—everything considered, the most celebrated French sonnet of the nineteenth century. Félix Arvers, one of the many minor frequenters of the Arsenal, was a kind of Musset in miniature. All else from his pen proved ephemeral. Nodier, charmed with the sonnet, was always having Arvers recite it at the soirées. The lines were originally written in the second album of Madame Mennessier. They are as follows, with their imperfect

punctuation, in the first edition (1833) of the poet's "Mes Heures Perdues," the words "Sonnet imité de l'Italien" not appearing in the album.

"Sonnet imité de l'Italien."

Mon âme a son secret, ma vie a son mystère;
Un amour éternel en un moment conçu:
Le mal est sans espoir, aussi j'ai dû le taire,
Et celle qui l'a fait n'en a jamais rien su.

Hélas! j'aurai passé près d'elle inaperçu,
Toujours à ses cotés, et pourtant solitaire,
Et j'aurai jusqu'au bout fait mon temps sur la terre,
N'osant rien demander et n'ayant rien reçu.

Pour elle, quoique Dieu l'ait faite douce et tendre,
Elle ira son chemin, distraite, et sans entendre
Ce murmure d'amour élevé sur ses pas;

A l'austère devoir, pieusement fidèle,
Elle dira, lisant ces vers tout remplis d'elle:
"Quelle est donc cette femme?" et ne comprendra pas.

(My heart has its secret, my life, its mystery; an eternal love in a moment conceived. The ill is without hope and so have I concealed it. And she who has caused it has never aught guessed.

Alas, I have passed near her form unperceived, ever by her side and yet ever alone. I shall have finished my term upon earth, year by year, asking of her nothing and nothing received.

And she, though God made her gentle and tender, will go her way freely and unaware, without hearing this murmur of love at her feet.

Correctly faithful to duty will always she ask, on reading this verse so filled with her soul, "Who is really this woman?" and never will know.)

This poem breathes the fragrant, tender loveliness of Madame Mennessier. It was because Arvers confined a perfect souvenir of her aroma in this little casket of a sonnet that he was saved to fame, and that something of the incense of her modest glory, which seemed to be daily dissipating in her self-disinterestedness, was preserved in a precious reliquary of rime. What confirms our feeling that Arvers diffused her charm in rhythm more felicitously than any of his great rivals is an instant's comparison of his sonnet with the two sonnets she sent Musset. We are conscious at once that her verse has more of the strain and quality of his than of Musset's or Hugo's. The same Arverian, low-voiced gentleness, the same warm love-note, are here. The verse of Arvers makes us think only of her—it is thoroughly impregnated with her fragrance. The poems of Hugo and Musset, on the contrary, are mainly filled with the thoughts of themselves.

We might now attempt to outline more fully the nature of the Nodier salon and its influence. We have

seen how Madame Mennessier, in whom the fireside life and the salon life appeared to intermingle in an inimitable manner, accentuated there a distinguishing emotionalism, domesticity and youth. By no means was there absent the background of books, art and culture, yet the artistic and the belletristic were somehow effaced by the presence of those individualistic, blood-throbbing people who laughed and wept, and were vigorously active and human in the flesh. At Nodier's Arsenal, men doted on fantastic imageries, and played in haunted domains of freaks and oddities in a way that seemed half childlike. There, women of copious and facile emotions were quick to sympathize and shed tears. There Victor Hugo, Lamartine and Musset found a plain humanity to work upon with all its sentimentality as well as naturalness; and, at will, they aroused it into triumphant enthusiasm or melted it into lachrymose weakness.

For it was the *heart* that reigned at the Nodiers', and the various moods it was doubtless wont to indulge in there may be seen reflected in the literary pages of those days. At times it was too soft and mushy, too tearfully and feebly good, like the verse of Madame Desbordes-Valmore with its "moonlights and weeping willows." At times it showed that mature sensibility, tolerance and maternal tenderness which were being developed in the volumes of George Sand. Again it displayed in some hours the kind of emotivity, corrected by esprit, vivacity and a clear, independent sense of the ridiculous, which graces the stanzas and paragraphs of Musset. And it was, of course, the symbol

of the sentiment of the "interior life"; for, as has been pointed out, the life of the inner-self then at length created, among the writings of French women, a notable volume in the "Journal" of Eugénie de Guérin.

The Nodier salon, with its influence for morality and family ties, antedated the bourgeois reign of King Louis Philippe, and existed almost until the new national epoch of 1848. One is thus led to remark how the Arsenal soirées were distinguished by characteristics not typically French, but English. Its open, unconventional, family hospitality was much like that of a country seat in England. It offered the truest and plainest of welcomes, and a conviviality which, in this instance, had only a little "sugared water to pass around." Its virtue lay in simply letting the guests feel chez soi. Madame Hugo remarks that "at the Nodiers' every one held his pleasure in his own hands, and was accountable to no one. Nodier obliterated himself too much ever to repress or interfere with any élan. His friends were more in their own house than in his. Indulgent, gracious and almost feminine, he offered as it were the hospitality-woman."

This personal, warming-pan comfort, this common, daily life, unaffected by the presence of friends and strangers, this freedom of the daughter in her intercourse with the guests, this predominance of very young people—all this was English, not French. It was but another evidence of the immense influx of things Anglo-Saxon into France with the Romantic school, and was naturally of the epoch when a large proportion of French poetry cited English verses for its texts and

mottoes. The idea of English family life here triumphed over that of the French chez soi. It was the home invading the salon. The moment the host and guests caught the fashion of appearing and doing much as they pleased in their assemblings, the fate of the historic salon was practically sealed; for, as M. Brunetière has well said, "there would be no salons if each of us brought only our natural selves." Thus the Nodier soirées exemplified in a significant way a transition from the *salon* of France to the *home* of England, and illustrated the eminence of the one and the virtues of the other.

The traits of the levees at the Arsenal became salient in our minds when we think of the "Classic" reunions of that day. The "Classic" salon of the gay and wanton hermit M. Jouy seems to have been the most inimical and persistent enemy which the Arsenal was blessed with. This antagonist seethed with violent rage whenever he glanced at any of the soft-eyed lyrics of Lamartine. "Whimperer!" he would exclaim. "You are lamenting, are you? You are poitrinaire, are you? What do you suppose I care? The dying poet! Eh bien! then die of your grief, blockhead—you won't be the first one!" And so we can fancy how M. Jouy could suddenly forget his gayety and descend into the bowels of direst wrath whenever a certain small word was even whispered in his presence. That word was Hugo.

The characteristics of the Nodier salon and its literary rôle are brought into a bolder and broader relief when we reread what Brunetière has signaled as the

effect of woman and the salons on French literature down to the close of the eighteenth century. The influence for presentable respectability and social seemliness in appearance and bearing, which Brunetière points out as the first lesson of the earlier salons, finds its complement in the influence at the Arsenal for morality, or the something that makes for the ideal of family. As the précieuses declared against the vulgar, the offensive, the coarsely wanton in letters, so the Arsenal stood as a protest against social irregularities and excesses and against the brutalities of the rights of passion which characterized so many pages of the turbulent young Romantics, and which Bohemianism insisted in attaching as a tail to the kite of the new school. So while Gautier and his chums were vigorously representing "liberality" and independence at the evening of Hernani, Marie Nodier and her companions were there unconsciously representing the claims and charms of simple virtue.

As distinguished from "elegance in precision, perfection in the measure, and, with the greatest writers, lucidity in profoundness," which were the results of the rôle of the traditional salons, there were to be found at the Nodiers', as we have seen, the two mates whose marriage had led to Romanticism, namely, *emotion* with its consciousness of weak and suffering mortality, and, as an alleviation or safety valve therefor, *imagination* with its realms of Faith and of fantastic diversion. Precision of outline here disappeared in the shifting moods and vague reaches of sentiment: the correct brain yielded to the overflowing heart which ignores

formalities and symmetries. The old-time feminine impulse for form was succeeded by the new feminine impulse for "matter," since no estheticism nor preciosity affected the Arsenal nor ever courted with perfumed graces any of its characteristic habitués. Corseted and bepowdered refinement here gave way before sweet, fresh-faced tenderness and sympathy; and the cult of caste and station, with its indifference to the rights or feelings of others, melted somewhat into the cult of self-sacrifice, or of the claims that come from without. Thus the old salons emphasized the aristocraticalness of French belles-lettres and kept them for two or three centuries removed from the people. It remained for the Nodier salon to bring French letters down, so far as a salon could, from the world of the upper class. The vivified and mortal-like volumes of the Romantics were not for the nobility of France. This new literature was, in some phases, for the bourgeoisie and, in others, for the Bohemians and the populace. It stirred the hearts, fancies and hopes of the *people* (using this word in its broadest sense), and bequeathed to France a *popular* literature. Therefore, while the literary reunions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries exemplified the "artificial and the superficial," and the aristocratic and solidarity, the Nodier circle taught naturalness and genuineness, democracy and individualism. It was the salon-Rousseau, in the best sense of the term.

Again, the salons of Brunetière were, as he says, far from encouraging any pursuits of the Indefinable or any excursions into the domains of the Dark and In-

scrutable. There were no Hamlets and Fausts in classic French literature, and the pages of Racine and Molière were untroubled by questions of free will and destiny. But in the grand *cénacle* of the Nodiers, it was precisely this love for the Unknowable, and for the realms of chiaroscuros which were the hovering counterpart and product of the Romantic deification of the Middle Ages, that gave the medieval Hernani to French belles-lettres. Imagination never could paint too strangely, terribly or darkly, nor fantasy limn the borders or margins of life too fantastically or grotesquely, to suit the wondering hearers of Hugo and Nodier.

And so, while the old aristocratic salons contributed to works of fiction—to the novel—and notably to the theater, the Arsenal associated itself with, and contributed to, the rise and growth of modern French poetry and of the French Romantic literature and art in their various phases. It is left for the twentieth century to determine whether the women of 1830 occasioned a wealth of "Letters" and "Correspondence" equaling, when measured by every standard, that of any previous isochronal epoch in France. But if it shall be found that they have not, it will be for the reason that they were enriching French literature in other and superior ways; for they were either poets putting their communications into the form of verse, or novelists publishing their confessions and confidences under the guise of romances, or solitaires writing "Diaries" and "Journals." As for the art of conversation, wherein the French have excelled alike in all times, the women at the Arsenal doubtless displayed less scintillating bril-

liance, less glinting mentality and preciosity in their liveliness of tongue than their fair predecessors; yet their colloquies must surely have shown more humanness and more spontaneous and colorful variety.

One observes then, in a word, with respect to the comparative characteristics of the Nodier salon, how the home life there began to "kill" the salon; how an English type of living succeeded to a French type of living; how the bourgeois dethroned the aristocrat, and liberty and liberality unloosened the hold of Court and tradition in all things; how French belles-lettres were popularized as well as romanticized; how the natural took precedence over the artificial, and the youthful over the old; how the individualistic rose up out of the social; how the heart and the inner sensibilities, color and the moral, displaced brain, mentality, form and the decorative, in the quasi triumph of the human over the artistic; and how imagination, the picturesque, the bizarre, the cult of the shapeless Unseen and of the obscure Unknown, were imported into the typically bright, sane, symmetrical, mundane sphere of French literary activity.

What a pity that Madame Mennessier-Nodier left no Journal or Memoirs! Her knowledge of the lettered life in France during the whole of the exciting Romantic epoch, her recollections of her countless great friends in their early, fame-striving years, her reasons for esteeming each of them individually, and her ac-

counts of how they were generally regarded in their young careers, and of the belletristic gossip and small talk of the day, would have been of unfailing interest and no little profit to posterity.

She liked the man Balzac and respected him. She knew him quite well despite the fact that he was scarcely visible to the world at large. No one in her circle ever dreamt in the 1830's that he would become what the marvelous Balzac is to us. He wrote novels, it was understood, but no one thought of asking if anybody had perused them, for every one was writing fiction and verse in those days. Madame Mennessier never in her whole life read one of his volumes, and naturally never could quite comprehend his posthumous glory.

She recounted this incident. "There was at that time [1842 or 3, not long before Nodier's death] a vacant fauteuil at the Academy, and Balzac was a candidate. One day he issued forth from my father's study, passed through the salon, and came and sat down by me. I asked him laughingly: 'Have you something of the look of a nonplussed canvasser? Is it possible, by chance, that my immortal has refused you his voice?'—'You could not guess what his answer was to me,' replied Balzac with an emotion all the more noticeable in his case, because it was not his nature to be easily moved. 'His response was: I will do better than give you my vote, my friend. I will leave you my place.' "

Madame Mennessier held Delacroix in high honor; and Lamartine and also Vigny, with his own seraphic and distinguished air, left her sweet and precious mem-

ories. Lamartine wrote her this touching letter toward the humiliating and hopeless end of his career. "Your 'Souvenirs' [of Charles Nodier], so opportune and so profound and so amiable, is one of the best fortunes of my life! This letter arrives in the very depths of my trouble, and consoles me so far as it is possible to console me. Know that you have done me great good. That will encourage you to recommence. I am here for three weeks in the midst of tribulations and lacerations of soul. France is without heart, but you have enough for all."

Jules Janin, who was constantly bumbling and buzzing about like a May beetle, was one of her most intimate friends, and they were uncommonly lively and espiègle when together. She had a quiet horror of Sainte-Beuve whose tongue, which appeared to be encouraged by his biographic methods in literary criticism, could taint the very air with suspicion.

The Hugo and Nodier families were most closely associated during the earlier period of the Romantic movement, and Madame Hugo and Marie Nodier were for fifteen years like sisters to each other. Nodier and Hugo went in company to Rheims to be present at the coronation of Charles X. It was also in 1824 that the Hugo and Nodier households together made their excursion to the Alps.

It was a famous tour full of incident and merriment, and daily inspired both verse and song in the two poets. Nodier was the clown of the party, and crowned their alpestrine ascension with a typically sublime and fantastic climax when he presented Victor Hugo to Mont

Blanc. Hugo's career after 1840 swept him outside the range of the intimacy and modest personal interest of Madame Mennessier. The Hugo who was peer of France, politician, statesman, exile, she did not know nor understand, and therefore she could not glory in nor sympathize with him. He was no longer for her the young gifted friend who had a lovable family and was almost a brother to her.

That he, on the other hand, always retained something of the feeling which he displayed in the 1830's in his verse to her, is evidenced by this letter which he wrote her near the end of his banishment. "Dear Marie, it's my fête—this bouquet which has come from you. I have just read an exquisite page of your book 'Charles Nodier.' Charles Nodier! what a tender and beautiful name! The name of your father, the name of my brother! He left you his soul, and you have put it in this book. You have his style, you have his conversation, you have his charm plus your own. By what means are you able to be his daughter and to seem at the same time his muse? You have taken up his quill, but I think it must have fallen from your own wings. You were his sweet angel. Merci et brava for your tender and touching volume, the embalmment of a noble memory! My wife has wept with emotion. I embrace the good and charming souls who surround you, and I kneel at your feet. Ave Maria."

Musset and Madame Mennessier were mates from childhood. He was by one year her senior. Their affection for each other was almost that of lovers. She was faithfully on his side in the Musset-Sand imbroglio.

She knew well enough how infantile, impetuous, erring he was, yet she believed heartily in his excellent intentions and in his essential manliness and truthfulness, and she deplored his suffering nature and career. As for George Sand, Madame Mennessier had never met her; and, whatever might be said of Musset, the pen and habits of living of the author of "Indiana" placed her, during that epoch, apart from the women of self-respecting Parisian households.

We have noticed how Musset sang of Madame Mennessier in verse, and we realize how he felt a touch of truth in writing her one day, in his characteristic way, apropos of the "respectable Arsenal where we had danced at fifteen." He exclaimed: "Alas, we have all become great personages, and la gloire, which does not dance, has separated everything. La gloire has permitted you, at least, to remain what you were—one of the most charming and spirituelles women in this stupid epoch."

But none of the illustrious friends of Madame Mennessier showed a more sincere and abounding affection for her in his way than the elder Dumas. He lives, in his whole big presence of body and heart, in this note which he sent her in 1867 in acknowledgment of her "Charles Nodier." "I received your letter and your volume this morning. To-night the book lies read through! I have just relived forty years. I swear to you, Marie, that one of my great regrets in not believing in the immortality of the soul, is to have to say to myself that I shall never see your father again. And if I do not hasten to you and embrace you, perhaps I

shall never see you again. Your father is the man whom I have loved the most tenderly. You are the woman, although you have never suspected it, whom I have loved the most paternally! You have written a beautiful book which has something saintly about it. Au revoir, Marie. If we never see each other again—Adieu! Bon, voilà, I discover that I have used a half sheet. You merit, nevertheless, a whole one. All my tenderness of heart to you."

How romantic and poetic it was for Dumas the Elder to salute her from the harbor of Tunis on a certain December morning in 1846! His boat was anchored there and he had been wakened at dawn by a vivid dream. It had taken such full possession of him that he could not shake off its charm, so he forthwith addressed her who had been "the queen" in his sleep. He described his vision of a "salon of white panel work. In the recess of this salon, and seated before a piano where her fingers wandered carelessly, there was a woman, inspired and pensive—a muse and a saint. I recognized this woman, and I murmured as if she could hear me:—'I greet you, Marie, full of grace—my thoughts are with you.' "

Speaking again of "this recess where the piano stood and where you sang," he exclaimed: "It is indeed rare that I do not say to myself, when I write a chapter which pleases me, or when I finish a book that is well done—'Marie Nodier, that precious spirit, will read this!' " And after giving a description of those who were always present at the old soirées, he thus closed the tender, emotional missive: "And, finally, that little

girl, slipping back and forth among all the poets, painters, composers, great men—the men of esprit and the savants! That little girl whom I took in the hollow of my hand and held up as if she were a statuette of Barye or Pradier! O, mon Dieu, mon Dieu, what has become of it all, Marie? . . . Vigny has become invisible; Lamartine is député; Hugo is peer of France; and my son and I are at Carthage!"

Such was this letter, filled with an affection that seemed born of a loverlike paternity—filled with the vision which effaced for Dumas that morning the mirific bay and panorama of Tunis and their hints of mirage. We too were full of this dream of her and of the old salon in the Arsenal as we passed one eve the little gray-walled cemetery of the flowery-laned village of Fontenay-aux-Roses in the environs of Paris. Entering and standing by her grave, we let the fragrance of her delicious souvenir trail over our consciousness; we scented the sanctuary of our love and veneration for her remembrance with the incense of the Arvers sonnet. And there came to our lips the words of Sainte-Beuve almost as if they had been written for her, instead of for her dead father fifty years ago—"the name of him (her) who has been nothing, who has been able to do nothing, who has had no other power than that of pleasing and charming—this name was in a moment upon our tongues, and every one shed tears."

The praise of her was sung of a sweet, simple womanhood. She was worshiped for this in all its pure essence and filial naturalness. Living long and well until the age of eighty-two, she was destined to be known to

no catalogue of art, nor anthology, nor history of noted French women; nor did even wealth display its glamour about her, since she was a daughter without dot, for whom her father had to sell his library in order to provide her trousseau. Glory, with his profane love of earthly fame and noise of deed, records her not because she *did* nothing; but her illustrious friends, in a beautiful cult which delights the heart and refreshes the soul, preserved to posterity her memory for what she *was*—something that is more precious to the Christian ideal. She might have said with another: "My talent perhaps would have been greater, if I had not been a wife and mother." For that matter, Madame Mennessier was of her race in that French women have always been inspirers rather than creators in literature and art. Yet we scarcely think of Madame Mennessier as French. Her memory belongs to every clime and country. She was an ideal that would flee the thought of race and sect and locality. No national boundary is so high and no race pride or prejudice so narrow as to resist the winning legend of her charm. She was a cosmopolitan type. Parisian in her gayety, esprit and conversational gifts, German in her music, English in her free girl's life and in her hospitable domesticity, she unconsciously infuses us with a lesson of the sisterhood of races and the brotherhood of man.

As we turned to go, overflowing with these thoughts and feelings, the little stock of vendible flowers at the cemetery gate looked us significantly in the eyes. And full of the impulse of the moment, we took two roses

and laid them on her tomb—a red rose for the Romantic school, a white rose in token of her sainted womanliness, and both to her honor as the true and adored daughter of the French Romantics. Then we closed the gate softly and came away in the dusk.

iii. The Great Era of the French Ballet

i. The Great Era of the French Ballet

THE GREAT ERA OF THE FRENCH BALLET

I—THE FAMOUS DANSEUSES

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In her days, too, there was the famous Sallé, whom Voltaire made the pendant to her in some memorable verses. Sallé invented the ballet-pantomime and did more to form the ballet into what it is to-day than any danseuse before Taglioni. One learns that the dance of Sallé was naïve, graceful, frilled neither with gambades nor sauts, and that she never scaled an entrechat nor twirled a pirouette.

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plied the models for the manners and courtesies of society. French politeness and grace were due in no small measure to the cult of the ballet among the best classes.

It is well known that the dancer Martel said he could always tell a statesman by his walk. For, as a rule, the leading Frenchmen of the century not only loved the spectacular dance, but took pride in imitating its elegancies. Frederick the Great, the then Frenchman of Germany, spoke from experience when he observed that he "should rather manage an army than a ballet, for it is easier to win a battle than make a ballet dance."

In the second half of the eighteenth century the ballet, as an art of the theater, progressed far more than during the years before 1750. It was after this year that Noverre crystallized, as it were, the modern "ballet of action" (ballet-pantomime). His "Letters" on the dance will doubtless ever remain the most classic literary composition on the subject.

Then came Vestris, more celebrated than any male dancer whose name has descended with history. He was famous for his dancing and for his remark: "There are only three men in Europe: the king of Prusshy, mossieu de Voltaire, and me." Probably the greatest danseuse of that time was la Guimard, whose sumptuous style of living and noisy career caused her to be, in a way, quite a formidable rival to the Court itself, adept as it was in the matter of sensations. Under Napoleon and the Restoration, the theater dance was

latively insignificant until, suddenly, Taglioni appeared and idealized it.

The male dancer predominated in the ballet before the era of Taglioni. It was he who developed and displayed the dance as Blasis described it about 1829 in his scholarly and authoritative book. On the other hand, by contrast, the danseuse relied largely on graceful attitudes, wavings of arms, poses of head, and coquetries of smiles and toilets. She did not revel in the dances par en haut with all their dexterous liveliness. Her art was comparatively confined to the upper half of the body. She sought to be a Ninon de L'enclos in the rôle of a ballet personage—a kind of grand dame who did not seek to triumph by difficult evolutions.

Blasis laid down this rule: "Men must dance in a manner very different from women; the temps de vigueur* and bold, majestic exertions of the former, would have a disagreeable effect in the latter, who must shine to delight by lithesome, graceful motions, by neat and pretty steps on the ground (terre-à-terre), and by a constant voluptuousness and abandon in all attitudes."

The illustrative evidence of the simplicity of the art of the danseuse before Taglioni is seen in the plates Blasis produces. Herein the ballerine is shown as wearing a thin robe reaching almost, if not fully, to the ankle and clinging somewhat to the body—a garment that would make severe pas impossible. Her foot, in many engravings, is lifted above the level of the knee only in two instances, and then scarcely up to the

* Temps de vigueur is any vigorous movement of the legs.

plane of the hip, and, too, behind, not in front; so that she details but the easiest movements and always preserves the most decorous attitudes. Nevertheless, the methods were sensualistic as taught by Vestris, the great teacher of the dance in Paris in the early part of the nineteenth century. Vestris seemed to think that the dance should seduce—should corrupt, in fact.

All the foregoing, however, was quickly to be forgotten for a new and ideal art with which a dancer known as Taglioni, who had a daughter named Marie, was to inspire the world. The divertissements displayed by the ballerine of to-day date in France from about 1829 when Marie Taglioni finally signed a long engagement with the directors of the Grand Opera. Of her performance, and of that of her brilliant successors, there is really little exact, satisfactory knowledge, since the art of the danseuse, like that of the orator, the singer, the actor, melts into air and is apt to be lost to precise trace.

One learns that Taglioni was born in 1804, in Stockholm, of Italian parents, and was consequently twenty-four years of age when she was first engaged at the Paris Opera. Her father trained her, and they followed their own fantasies in their profession. They had enjoyed perfect independence before they came to Paris, for they had never been connected regularly with a theater.

Free from the corsets of the then school, their dance donned the draperies of inspiration. Castil-Blaze remarked that Taglioni's grace was naïve; that her pas

at once seemly and voluptuous; that she was
l with an extreme lightness; and that the newness
r effects came from Nature and not from rubric.
sylphlike manner, he repeats, was elegant, facile,
of gentle contours.

. Véron, who was the director of the Paris Opera
Taglioni soared into the fullest flight of her glory,
her lightness, her elevation,* and above all her
ı.** He emphasizes that her dance partook of
ıcy, taste and authority; that she possessed a
té almost mystically religious; that all women
her enthusiastic champions because her art was
odest and refined and her homeliness so excep-
l. He writes that her legs suggested those of
ı; that her bust was short and narrow and that
rms were very long. This explains why she was
imes called the "little hunchback." He says that
id not lack esprit, and was fond of raillery. She
her task during four hours a day. Neither
ıe, perspiration, nor tears on her part ever per-
d her father to shirk the daily lesson. She re-
l six thousand dollars a year, with three months'
of absence.

fortunately, Blasis's volume, which is to-day the
eneral and practical authority on the dance, since
rre has become somewhat archaic and circum-
d, was written a little before Taglioni's time, and
ver mentions her name. Adice testified that she

appear elevated from the ground.
have ballon is to be able to leap lightly from the stage to a
eight.

excelled in executing an adage* with aplomb and precision. In 1856, Saint-Léon, the great choregraph, thus spoke of her: "Taglioni did not dance better than her precursors, but her dance differed in kind. She was above all remarkable because of a mixture of poetry and simplicity, of grace and suavity. She was criticized at first because she almost always held her arms lowered, and carried her body bent forward; still these happy defects made her a sensation. She did not heed so much the rules of the 'school' as did the danseuses before her time, yet more than do our danseuses of to-day.

"Her gift was a certain something that charmed, and created a furor. She educated the public thenceforth to demand a talent type—a star. She concentrated all interest on herself, and ballets, whose effects reposed in the ensemble, went out of fashion. The environment of the corps de ballet was effaced so that it might not distract attention from the queen of the evening. Even the glory of the male dancer hopelessly paled because, in trying unsuccessfully to invent for himself some new mode that would correspond to Taglioni's creation, he lost 'school.' "

(Notice may at once be called to the fact that Saint-Léon erred in observing that Taglioni did not dance better than her precursors. His confusion arises because he does not happen to distinguish between male and female dancers. Taglioni may not have detailed, and probably, on the whole, did not detail, so much

* Adages, or développés, are various poses. These poses, leaped, make up the greater part of the dance.

difficult skill as her male forerunners; but she certainly achieved more expert and exhausting pas and evolutions and displayed more grace than her female predecessors, as will be remarked further on.)

There was in 1900, in Paris, a venerable gentleman who had been connected with the ballet for sixty years. He saw Taglioni dance, likewise nearly all of the ballerines who have appeared in France since her day. He said that she was a little taller and larger than Fanny Elssler; that, while the latter had a prettier face, Taglioni was better proportioned and had more harmony of physique; and that she outdanced Elssler, for it was the mere art of the dance that won with her, whereas Elssler freely exploited on the stage her claims as a seductive woman. He also said, comparing Taglioni with her successors, that she was good in dramatic pantomime; that she mounted very well on the pointes while not relying on them particularly; and that she paid little notice to pirouettes on the pointes.

The accepted French account of her runs about like this:—We are told that she personified delicate grace, exquisite taste, correctness, aërial lightness and chasteness. She coiled in facile undulations; her arms curved in an elegance of action; her feet posed on, or skimmed over, the ground without noise, as if she were a sylph. Appearing and disappearing like a dream, a vision, she was now a veritable winged caprice, and then a tender, affecting elegy, with her eyes bathed in tears and her wings fallen. She writhed in no lascivious contortions, and offered no sensualities. She poetized the dance.—

"La Sylphide" and "la Fille du Danube" were her

finest triumphs; yet scarcely less famous were her creations of the pas tyrolienne in Rossini's "Tell," and the pas de fascination in Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable." She was not a woman but a charm, and became the synonym of the purest traditions of that Terpsichorean art which is ideal and neither realistic nor voluptuous.

Many of the greatest men of literature in that day were fond of singing her praises. Balzac, Thackeray and Musset wrote of her, and Banville versified her as the daughter of the sylphs. Gautier refers to her vaporous grace, and to her "chaste school which makes of the dance an almost immaterial art by reason of a modest distinction, of a retiring reserve, and of a virginal diaphaneity."

In attempting, from the foregoing, to fashion in one's vision with something like precise fancy the aërial model of her art, the word sylph seems best to serve the purpose. Lithe, suave, airy, Taglioni must have appeared as of the skies. She transposed the dance into the key of mythology and gave it the classic phrasing. Her winged celerities and hoverings, her fragile moods of tear-gauzed sorrow and flitting vivacities, all molded into the sculpturesque danse noble —the "dance serious" and ideal.

There were no excesses, no boldnesses, no self-torturings, no self-consciousness. It was an impersonal representation, in which the warm-handed, individualistic woman was effaced in a type of removed and refrigerant ethereality. She transferred the fancied pantheons of Greece and Rome, in their traceries of

neat proportions and white vistas, to the crepuscular world of blue gleams and slate-colored hues which a stage moonlight spreads abroad in the realms of the modern theater. She attached the seal of classicality to an art which had been mincing artificially, coquettishly, wantonly, in the domains of the ancien régime.

Taglioni not only etherealized the dance but she detailed a more elaborate performance than the danseuses who preceded her. A reference to Blasis's work proves this conclusively. It is true that she did not follow what was called "the school" so closely as they, yet following the dry rules of "the school" does not produce a star, for none of the ballerines from Sallé and Camargo to Taglioni is remembered merely for her dancing. The fact that Taglioni's skirts were slightly convex and were shorter and stiffer than those of her predecessors indicates that she accomplished more expert pas than had ever been known.

In the first place, she indulged somewhat in pointe dancing, whereas that had not been practiced by either her male or female predecessors. There is no chapter on pointes in the book of Blasis. He speaks of them, but his illustrations show that he means what are called nowadays demi-pointes—balancing on the toe, not on the tip of the toe—an altogether different and more difficult performance. Furthermore, Taglioni was the first to claim the grande vigueur for her sex, and to create the ballon for which she is famous. The ballon is one of the most exhausting and crucial exhibitions on the ballet stage, yet the word is scarcely mentioned, if at all, by Blasis.

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This fully explains the significant result of the Taglionization of the dance, namely, that the scepter of Terpsichorean glory was therein definitively snatched by woman from the hand of man. Before Taglioni's day, most of the distinctively great dancers were men, and to them the art owed most of its progress. Since her time, nearly all the leading artists have been women; the transformations of the dance have been due to their revelations; and it has indeed become almost wholly their own prize. The point of departure for the new and aërial art of Taglioni lay in the free and dexterous use of the legs. In their skill of flight she could buoy up her lightness and grand ballon and make herself seem a shapely form floating hither and thither. Her arms, face and body entered fully into the easy harmony of her evolutions, so that one part of her person was not sacrificed for another, and she was therefore able to present a perfect ensemble of volatile grace such as is fancied in a sylph.

When one muses over the Taglioni tradition, he may think of the contrast offered by this striking passage in the "Journal" of Alfred de Vigny: "If I were a painter, I should like to be a Raphael-black; angelic form, somber color." Were one a dancer, would she not divinely long to be a Taglioni-white; sylphine form, color of the cool Pentelic?

The Elsslers were Germans. The two sisters came to Paris in 1834. Therese was a tall, large woman, and the Viennese called her The Majestic One. Energy and virility characterized her. She was a very correct

and schooled danseuse. Her more celebrated sister, Fanny, was born in Vienna in 1810. About 1840 she toured in America where, as she wrote Gautier with delight, "people throw flowers into my carriage and men lift their hats to me in the street."

A sketch of her is thus traced by a contemporary: "Inimitable delicacy, gentleness, a fine and light distinction in bearing, a supple agility, a coquetry always active and ardent, the art of fascination, a sensuous intelligence which is reflected by her whole body, and, finally, a delicious mincing air, are the outlines of her portrait. Her person is in accord with her talent. Her body is slender; her face noble and piquant, and its expression distinguished, spirituelle and provoking; her glances are soft and caressing, and speak without effrontery. She even transforms some defects into attractions. Her feeble and wearied appearance appears to testify that secret ardors burn within her. She dances to charm, to trample the spectator under foot. Taglioni revealed to us the dance of heaven; Elssler desires the love of man. If the one is the sister of the angels, the other is the most adorable of the daughters of earth."

The usual memorial of her is about as follows:— Her beauty was frail and delicate. She possessed great talent, but the expression of the pantomime, substituted for the charm of the dance, was what people admired in her. She had grace and executed tours de force on the pointes. She was reproached for a lack of lightness, yet her mobile face and the vivacity of her gestures lent

themselves marvelously to the play of the passions, and she left traditions in all her rôles. The cachucha* was her triumph, and she made all Europe know its signification. With her castanets and her mimicry full of meaning and admirably served by entrancing music, she caused the public to forget Taglioni for a moment, though she did not equal the latter in the art of the dance. Elssler never approached the stage without terror, but her fear gave way to a furious gayety as soon as the orchestra struck up.—

It was remarked that she had no grand élans, still she exhibited a highly-wrought finish, and executed a trill of battements like Paganini's bow. Gautier says, in speaking of her as the cachucha incarnate compared with Taglioni as the incarnation of a sylph: "She is masculinity effeminated, like Antinoüs. Her movements are made up of this dual nature: with all her amorous languor and feminine gentleness, one feels the brusque strength and the steel-limbed agility of a young athlete. She is the first to introduce at the Opera—the sanctuary of the classic pirouette—a fougue, a petulance and a passionate temperament.

"They call her, by way of compliment, a Spaniard of the North. This double trait is a subject for criticism, not praise. She is German by reason of her smile, whiteness of her skin, form of face, placidness of brow; she is Spanish by reason of her hair, her little feet, her small, slender hands, the somewhat bold curving at the hips. Two natures, two temperaments, combat

* The cachucha is a Spanish dance which combines the qualities of the rapid fandango with those of the more majestic bolero: that is to say, it is sometimes calm, sometimes gay, sometimes passionate.

each other in her, and her beauty would gain if it could decide for one or the other of these two types. She is pretty, yet she lacks a race; she hesitates between Spain and Germany. And this indecision announces itself in the matter of sex: her hips are but slightly developed and her chest does not exceed the curves of the antique Hermaphrodite. While she is a very charming woman, she would be the most charming boy in the world."

Referring to her in 1838, Gautier wrote: "Fanny has a fire, an entrain, and a suppleness beyond imagination. She accords to her poses a proud, spirited accent—something so bravely voluptuous that it would make the most enraged dancers of Seville burn with envy. Her cachucha is becoming thoroughly Spanish. She daily gives way more and more to this divine dance strewn with languors and petulances. It seems rather singular that a Spanish dance has been brought to us by a German; but genius, is it not of all countries?"

It is apparent that Fanny Elssler lacked the mythological, aërial grace of Taglioni. She was a woman first, a danseuse afterward. She associated the dance with her Germanic passion for music, and consumed all in the glowing sensuousness of a strongly feminine nature. Hence she was good in pantomime. Her mimicry was "full of finesse in that she imitated turn by turn, and with remarkable truth, comedian, coquette, quarreling page, and libertine."

This preëminence of beauty, sensuous coquetry, vertiginous vivacity, and disposition to indulge in tours de force, made her, in the ballet era since 1829, the first

and most celebrated danseuse de demi-caractère, and the companion in fame of Taglioni, the impersonal perfection of the danse noble. Fanny Elssler moved not along the classic lines of a generalized ideality that seems of no race nor epoch; but she characterized her dance by her warm-limbed individuality, and by her sentiments of locality and nationality, as immortalized in her cachucha. By these terre-à-terre and more realistic features of the dance, she made up so very largely for her comparative lack of the grander Taglioni motives—grande vigueur, grand ballon.

Carlotta Grisi quickly danced into Parisian favor in 1840. She was taught by the famous Perrot who became her husband. She created "Giselle," one of the renowned ballets of the century. Its libretto was partly from the pen of Gautier, who seemed always to look back upon "Giselle" with a satisfaction only surpassed by that with which he recalled the battle of Hernani. "Giselle" was the greatest triumph of the Grisi, although in "la Péri" she accomplished a perilous leap which, it is said, has never been undertaken in the same way by any one. She danced for pleasure—coming, going, bounding hither and thither, and charming all hearts with her bright, laughing face as well as by the perfection of her method.

Gautier, who soon came under her spell and abandoned somewhat his ardor for the art of Elssler, writes of Carlotta: "Her dance is light and correct. She is aërial, and modest like Elssler, and has a happy and communicative gayety. She was a singer and loved music, and her career hesitated sometime between Eu-

terpe and Terpsichore. Carlotta has rhythmic harmony of movement, finish of detail, and elegance and neatness of pose. In pantomime, she omits no traits of gentleness, naïveté, sentiment and expression, and her play has grace and vigor. She dances as if sporting, and all scenes are easy for her."

Carlotta Grisi married the art of Elssler to that of Taglioni. Indeed, she "held an intermediate place between them." She added lightness to the one and joyousness to the other without equaling either. She gave a delicate, classic form to the dance of Elssler and, possessed of a birdlike and sunny Italian temperament, she capered from Taglioni's realm into the domain of demi-caractère. La Grisi was Elssler and Taglioni blended in miniature. She suggested perhaps one of Gautier's own "Emaux et Camées" enlivened into joyousness. What Elssler had done for Germany and Spain, vis-à-vis the mythological (the Greek) conception of Taglioni, Grisi did for Italy. Her memory, so lauded by Gautier, remains one of the most delightful souvenirs that haunt the Paris Opera.

During the epoch of Grisi, there was seen in Paris a danseuse of whom very little information can be gathered from literature. It was Priora. She is said to have been a large, elegant, distinguished looking person, and was of so cold a nature that she never laughed or smiled on or off the stage. Those who saw her say that she perfected the danse noble: that she had more correctness and reach, more stately grandeur, more of a lofty flight, than Taglioni.

After Grisi, one comes to a new variety of dance

which was impersonated by the dainty and piquant Cerrito. She was of Italian origin. She came to the Opera in Paris in 1847, and was reëngaged five years later. In London about 1845, she had danced a pas de quatre with Taglioni, Elssler and Grisi. The world will doubtless never witness again such a group of danseuses as was this, for therein the four most honored fairies of the modern dance interlaced their steps.

Fanny Cerrito took up the wreath of glory which Grisi had left behind in the French capital. It appears that she was as light as a caprice, that her dance was wholly one of fantasy, that she captivated by her entrain, and that the Italians called her "the fourth Grace" because of the charm of her person. The flowery though commonplace bust of her in the private foyer of the Paris Opera shows a sweet face delicately textured and neatly compact, a mincing yet mobile mouth, and shoulders that sloped in wonderful curves downward. Saint-Léon writes only this of his wife: "Cerrito is a reproduction of Taglioni but more naïve. She is a dancer of inspiration and nature, with less school than either Taglioni or Elssler."

Cerrito created the danse de fantaisie. It came and went with her. No one has ever put a competent foot in any part of her repertoire Her cajolery seems to have been indefinably fanciful and light-trimmed—something that the eye and pen could scarcely seize. It was not her dancing that won, for she was not really a remarkable danseuse. She triumphed with her coquetry, and with her witching manner. It was the art of the ingénue spiced up by an experienced woman.

Much of the credit of her creations was due to her husband.

Another Italian, Rosati, furnished a type quite different from any yet described. She came to Paris in 1853. Her tradition runs after this fashion:—A woman with a feverish head and a look lugubrious and Satanic. She excelled in the genre vigorous, noble and pathetic; scarcely less striking in laughing and informal rôles; unequaled when she expressed passion. The most delicate nuances were rendered by her mimicry with precision and distinctness. Nothing vague in her sentiments; yet she endeavored to ignore details, thinking that a few well selected traits sufficed to produce the most surprising effects. Her gestures were simple, and her attitudes full of grace and harmony. She left, notably in "la Sonnambula," ineffaceable souvenirs. Ingenious and intelligent in the conception of impersonations, now fiery and then affecting, now engulfed in despair, and then ravished as if by the ecstasy of delightful reveries, she realized in pantomime what Ristori accomplished in the drama.—Those who danced with her say that Rosati was a pretty, well-proportioned brunette of about the size of Mlle. Subra, and that she was the greatest of all pantomime ballerines, and also an exceptionally good comrade.

Here at length entered the drama into the dance. Rosati was a tragic actress who expressed the grander moods of human nature with everything but the voice. In her there seethed the black passions of Italy as if she had come from some brimstone Vesuvius. She exalted the danse de demi-caractère into epic mimicry;

she had the gift of heroic contours. She was the last as well as the first in France, in the nineteenth century at least, to outline the loftiest reach and effectiveness of the pantomime.

Ferraris made her début in Paris in 1856. Her triumph in the "Elfes" and in "Orfa" was noteworthy. She surpassed herself in "Graziosa" (1861), and was called "the rival of Elssler." It is recorded that she had brilliant and varied action, that she was light and graceful with an expressive pantomime, that her play was bold and that she conceived the dance (de demi-caractère) in its purest, most elevated, most erudite Italian type.

In poor Emma Livry, a French girl, the Parisians were promised a revival of the danse noble of Taglioni. She had but commenced her career when she became the victim of a horrible accident. Her costume caught fire at a rehearsal and, after eight months of a martyrdom of torture, she died. All Paris suffered with her pain, and did full honor to her memory at the interment.

Her bust in the Opera exhibits a large-framed, homely face, yet one that is intelligent, sympathetic and kind—in marked contrast to that of the dainty and simpering Cerrito, its companion in the private foyer. Emma Livry first appeared in 1858 in "la Sylphide," Taglioni's magical creation, and the public hailed her classic art with a national pride. Taglioni herself came from her villa on Lake Como to welcome her latest rival in fame. She one day gave her portrait to the young danseuse, with this happy conceit: "Make me

forgotten; do not forget me." Emma Livry introduced only two rôles. One of them was "le Papillon" —a ballet composed in part by Taglioni who, at that epoch, tarried in Paris some time. Emma Livry was truly a danseuse noble. She confined the dance to its classic simplicity and nymphean elegance.

Gautier, the admirer of all ballerines, thus speaks of her: "In catching a glimpse of her across the transparences of her draperies, whose borders her feet scarcely lifted, one would have said she was a happy shadow, an elysian apparition, sporting in a bluish ray. She had an imponderable lightness, and her silent flight traversed space without our hearing even a thrill in the air. She imitated the butterfly in 'le Papillon'—a butterfly that poses on flowers and does not bend them. And alas! like one, she burned her wings in the flames; and two white butterflies, as if they wished to escort the funeral cortège of a sister, winged their snowy way above her white coffin during its whole journey to the cemetery.

"This incident, in which the Greeks would have seen a poetic symbol, was remarked by thousands of persons in the great multitude that followed the burial chariot. On her tomb what epitaph shall be traced if not the one that was conceived by an ancient poet for some Emma Livry of antiquity?—'O earth, weigh lightly upon me; I have weighed so lightly upon thee.' The public wished to honor the modest virtue of this pure life, in whose presence scandal has ever been silent. If anything can console the sorrow of the mother, it is the fact that there were in the proces-

sion, among the celebrities of the Opera, two sisters of charity who had cared for her daughter in the Christian agony of the poor girl."

Boschetti, a danseuse from Milan, came to Paris about 1863 and met with much enthusiasm. Pretty and small, she was only seen, as a rule, in "little ballets." It is claimed that she had, to French eyes, a rival in the correct, graceful and modest Mourawieff. Boschetti, it is said, reveled in prodigious bounds and delirious pirouettes. She displayed a passionate fougue and a voluptuous suppleness.

The usual French comment on her was about as follows:—This Italian has been criticized because she deployed an exaggerated mimicry; but it has been overlooked that the Italian choregraphs have always elevated the pantomime to a degree of expression reached in no other country. Boschetti has transported to our stage the historic, traditional pantomime of which our dilettants know little. Her style consists more of the Neapolitan tarantella than of the Spanish bolero. It is not without grace, nobility and majesty, in spite of its impossibilities. She recalls an ardent sky and a burning earth's surface. In 1864 her triumph was complete in Brussels where she executed the dances of many races.—

The dance of Boschetti, like that of Rosati, was an Italian transposition of the danse de demi-caractère into the realm of pantomime. But she did not tread along such grandiose lines of the art as Rosati: she seems to have given the furor of the tarantella to the ballet, and the frolic of Pulcinella to the pantomime.

Rita Sangalli was a Milanese, and created in New York the principal rôle in "Black Crook." She danced throughout the United States from east to west, and experienced various characteristic phases of frontier life in America. In the Far West she often went armed in order to defend herself from the Indians; and many times she took gold dust and game in pay for her performances in mining towns where coins and bills were a scarce medium of exchange.

She was first billed at the Opera in Paris in 1872. The occasion was the revival of "la Source" of Délibes, wherein she met with a gratifying success as the fairy in the enchanted grotto. She shared in the ceremonies in connection with the opening of the New Opera in 1875. It appears, however, that Sangalli was not an accomplished ballerine. Those who can speak from personal knowledge say that she was comparatively ignorant of the art; that when she was engaged at the Opera, she had to have lessons for eight months before she was considered ready to grace its boards; that her superb physique and her marvelous tours des reins, not her dancing, brought her fame.

In Léontine Beaugrand, a Parisienne, the Opera had a child of its own. She began to assume important rôles in 1864. Gautier spoke of her dance as "graceful, correct and light-winged." She was called "an ornamentist who, in a flight, makes a design of her taquetés and her pointes. It is exquisite, slender, delicate, like a fabric of lace." Banville wrote of her: "She is simple, true and elegant by nature; she is correctly spirited; she is born of the rules of the dance and

of its purest traditions." Beaugrand's greatest success is said to have been in "Coppélia" in 1871, in which she took up the score left by Bozzacchi. This rôle was conceived originally for Beaugrand.

Notwithstanding all this praise, it appears that Beaugrand had "no chance"—was not favored of fortune. Nearly always she saw the best rôles distributed to strangers, for the reason that the Opera public generally prefers the exotic sensation of a foreign bayadère. A native ballerine, however excellent her art, does not magnetize so much money into the coffers of the Opera as a danseuse who comes from afar.

Beaugrand had the French traditions of delicacy, lightness and refinements coupled with pointes of steel. Her lofty bearing made her known, despite her diminutiveness, as "the marshal of the dance." Her sudden retirement from the Opera raised a storm of protests, though without avail. The "Beaugrand question" was the theme of the day, and called out tributes for her even from such distinguished pens as that of Sully Prudhomme who arabesqued her neat fame in one of his most fragile sonnets. Although a danseuse noble in type, she was so small that she presented, as it were, the danse noble of a little girl. She fully understood herself, and dignified her profession, even if in a miniature way.

Mlle. Fonta was an intelligent and finished danseuse noble—the most truly noble of any ballerine at the Opera toward 1890, for she had what Beaugrand lacked, namely, size. She retired from the stage, but was to be seen for several years in the drawing rooms

of the French metropolis. Of Marie Vernon, Fioretti, Granzow, Mourawieff, Mérante, Salvioni, Fatou, little has been written, and they did not contribute in a noteworthy way to the development of the dance. Bozzacchi, who created the principal rôle in "Coppélia," died prematurely in Paris during the siege. She promised a decided talent.

Coming to the two stars who were preserving at the close of the century the best memorials of the dance at the Paris Opera, one found the danse noble illustrated by Mlle. Subra and the danse de demi-caractère by Mlle. Mauri. Born in Paris and educated entirely there, Subra had what is called "school." She made her début in 1881 in the ballet of Thomas's "Hamlet," and in 1882 took Bozzacchi's rôle in "Coppélia." She was considered an unusually beautiful ballet woman, and was corseted in a neat and refined distinction of grace. Her beauty and elegance of manner outrivaled her dancing.

Her person, however, showed what a well-meaning yet awkward artisan Nature sometimes is. She had, with good height and a pretty face, a large, squarish, handsome body with an ample bust. As a result her body, expressing neither litheness nor emotion, was plethorically refractory to all dances. And her limbs did not belong to it. They were trim, sculptural and full of poseful cadences. Her legs, in their daintiness and natty chasteness, recalled those of Diana of Gabies. While her body gave her a fine presence and elevation for the danse noble, her thin limbs destroyed in her the possibility of realizing its perfection.

Her grace, then, was that of the limbs and not of the ensemble, since her physique lacked symmetry and any suggestion of sylphine harmony. But the grace of the legs was defective in that it was restrained rather than intuitive and open-flung, for they were necessarily conscious of the unnatural burden which the well-developed body imposed upon them. They always kept well under it perforce, instead of capriciously skimming about as if having little to support.

By contrast, her lovely arms and hands were freely and exquisitely interlaced in her dance. One perhaps never before noticed hands—whereon, as Verlaine would say, "a delicacy has left its succinct entasis"—representing and interpreting so much with a grace so impeccable. Thus the elegance of Subra was more statuesque than Terpsichorean; and her limbs, in their plastic contours of motion, contributed delectably to the spectacle of a marmorean figure in movement, from which any hint of the wasp-waisted, air-blown Parisienne was quite whisked away.

Subra offered much charm and much hopeless incongruity. Never of the air, never melting into music, and conceived of no celerities nor supplenesses, her evolutions and attitudes were confirmed in the habits of verticalness—of action up and down. Yet she had a good ballon; she was distinguished, never banal or sensational; she performed with taste, with a cultured and instinctive regard for esthetic effect. Her pas suggested little worth noting. Possessed of no originality, she invented nothing. She executed correctly without inspiration or naïveté the velocities which had been

outlined for her. Her toilets, on the other hand, were remarkable for their fascinating style and becomingness. And it was with them, together with her beauty, her grace of Paros and her chaste decorum, that she succeeded as a sightly ministress in the Taglioni tradition.

The danse de demi-caractère was personified at the Paris Opera at the close of the century by Mlle. Rosita Mauri, who was the veritable queen of the ballet in France for that whole generation. She was the daughter of a Spanish master of ballet, and began her dexterous career in Milan. Finally at La Scala there Gounod remarked her. This led to her appearance in his "Polyeucte" in Paris in 1878. In 1879 the French secured her permanently. She received nine thousand dollars a year, with one month's leave of absence. She created many rôles.

Her form, in its ensemble, was much superior to that of Subra. It had harmony and was indeed quite perfect for a danseuse de demi-caractère in that epoch. Her body was somewhat slender, of easy contours, and not refractory to the dance. Her grace, suiting the character of her dance, was of course unlike that of Subra. It was less distinguished, less refined, less classically correct. She had, in opposition, the freer girth of a torrid physique as well as the spirited loyalty and very feminine nature of a high-metaled Spanish woman. It was that certain désinvolture which comes to an athletic performer—a large and disjointed facility of limb. That is to say, her characteristic note was strength. To muscular rapidity rather than to

transcendent elegance was ascribable her maestria.

Thus she triumphed not by polish of action, beauty and charm of toilet, but by her Spanish chic, as it were, and above all by her skill in pas. Her dance, signalized by its dexterous power, was of the legs. The rest of her body was largely sacrificed to them. Nevertheless, the attention, confined to her lower limbs, was well repaid, for in observing them during an act of ballet one might learn, for the first time perhaps, what intelligence, strength and expertness may be columned forth and flourished about by a well-trained pair of legs, and might note how capacious their scope for expression.

And it was with them that the Mauri courted fine grace. Her feet were handled with an unapproachable effectiveness and ease. It was precisely with them that she gave vent to that fieriness—that endiablement—for which she was noted, and which was the Terpsichorean expression of her athletic vigor fusing in a hot temperament. The French world had never seen a star with such a competent pair of lower limbs as these.

Subra had the presence, elevation and ballon of the danse noble, and Mauri had a very mobile parcours* and masterly pas on the ground. Her entrechats and batterie** were not so lofty and hence naturally not so

*Parcours denotes the ability to cover all parts of the stage with a rapid effectiveness. Temps parcourus are varied evolutions performed while quickly traversing the scene.

**The batterie designates the repeated action of leaping in the air, curving the legs open, and crossing the feet several times before reaching ground. The entrechat is a light and brilliant leap during which the dancer crosses his feet rapidly and alights in certain positions or attitudes.

brilliant as those of Subra, yet they were more skillfully and ambitiously performed, and therefore really merited more praise. Subra, with a pointed foot, mounted on showier pointes; but Mauri, having a foot partly "square" and partly "pointed," whirled truer pirouettes on the pointes than any of her precursors or companions. In fact she rarely, if ever, turned a pirouette on the instep, since a "square" foot supports sure and easy, though not brilliant, pirouettes on the pointes. The instep of the danseuse noble is naturally stronger than that of the danseuse de demi-caractère for she has to mount higher.

Mauri kept her laurels by her imposing, expert energies. She was indefatigable and ingenious, and had the art of fanning the spectators into enthusiasm when she flipped a cabriole or escaladed a soubresaut. She did not display the dry, fine scintillations of French radiance, nor the poetry and "school" of Subra (with her grace of molding music into gesture), nor sylphine lightness; but she knew how to stride down the parallels of some masterful waltz as it swayed back and forth across the levels of three score of violin bows. She had a marked personality, as befits the demi-caractère, burnt ardor into the boards by her pas, and was thus notably a danseuse and a genuine virtuosa.

A word about male dancers may be inserted here. Taglioni, Gardel, Noblet, Petipa, Perrot, Saint-Léon, Mérante, have been applauded in Paris since Vestris, yet their glory, as already noted, has been eclipsed by that of the danseuses. The list wound up worthily in the 1890's in the person of Vazquez—"friend Vaz-

quez," as he was popularly known among the personnel at the Opera.* He had been on its boards from the age of ten. He became "first dancer" after appearing with Beaugrand in the Fandango.

All that could have been suggested to make him ideal in his art was a little more brilliancy of batterie and a little more height. He had all the rest—grace, vigor, Spanish suppleness, a handsome form, the flavor of a good-humored seriousness. Doubtless none of his famous precursors equaled him in the number of difficult pas which he offered. The male dancer of the time of Vestris knew nothing of pointe dancing; and if one glances at the illustrations in the book of Blasis, he will observe that the dancer represented therein never lifts the foot and leg higher than the hip, showing that the present high-foot evolutions were not then known even to male dancers.

II—THE TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE BALLET FROM TAGLIONI TO 1900

From the above figurines in the realm of Terpsichore, one observes that there are four types of the ballet dance. They are the danse noble, as conceived and detailed in an unrivaled manner by Taglioni, and finally represented by Mlle. Subra; the danse de demi-caractère, as first outlined by Fanny Elssler and finally interpreted by Mlle. Mauri; the danse of fantaisie of Cerrito; and, to conclude, there is what may be called

* To Vazquez, the author has been under great obligations for a generous amount of information and for very many interesting courtesies and cordial favors.

the danse de pantomime, as made notable by Rosati. The danse comique disappeared from the boards. The danse de fantaisie is essentially a form of the danse de demi-caractère. In the danse de pantomime, wherein the mimicry rather than the dancing takes the lead, the Italians (one may almost say the Neapolitans with their Pulcinella) have always surpassed. The pantomime was in ancient times a Roman, not a Greek, creation, and hence it seems to have ever been preeminently an art of the boot-leg peninsula.

The two great types of the modern ballet-dance, the danse noble and the danse de demi-caractère, correspond to the classic and romantic styles in literature. It is worthy of notice that just when the Romantic school was bursting into triumph in France, Taglioni was fashioning in Paris the classic models of ballet dancing. But she was quickly followed by the romantic, music-spun Elssler from Germany.

The danseuse noble is occupied with molding formal outlines and impersonal contours into ideal motion—with form rather than sentiment and color. The danse noble is largely confined to mythological scenes where nymphs disport in white moonlights and sylphs glisten across dark vistas. Its utmost possibilities seem to have been almost perfectly realized by Taglioni, so that it offers little scope for new inspirations. It has given way before the demi-caractère in later times much as the classic has given way before the romantic in France.

As an illustration of typical Greek dancing—or, one may say, of the danse noble of the ancient Hellenes—

there is an account of Taglioni in Palladio's Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza in 1842. This edifice was designed according to the plans of ancient theaters, and Taglioni was imitating, on the spur of the moment for a little party of friends, those classic ballerines known as the danseuses de Pompeii. The commentator says: "Taglioni knew at once how to put herself in harmony with the surroundings. She held up her dress a little with both hands. The dance was as if performed by a statue. She turned no pirouette; she formed no obtuse angle with the legs; she did not stand on one toe; she did not spin dizzily around. She remained nearly the whole time in one spot, while her feet declaimed lovely, noble, ancient rhythms, and her little head swayed hither and thither. Had he seen her then, Theodor Mundt would not have said: 'Taglioni dances Goethe.' He would have exclaimed: 'Taglioni dances Sappho, Anacreon and Catullus!' "

The danse de demi-caractère is romantic and expansive because it skirts about in the exotic, in the sentimental, in the individualistic, in the sensational. National, provincial and village dances, as well as dances of sailors, of draperies, of colors, enter under its name. It scours all lands and pries into all vocations for new pas and divertissements. It renews itself in the themes of such dancers of fantasy as was Carmencita, and in such caprices as was Loïe Fuller's dance of colored robes. Thus it has variety, and is susceptible of progress in its continual transformations. It is more terra-à-terre than the elevated, aërial danse noble.

To appreciate the great characteristic of the ballet

dance in modern times, one only needs to compare it for a moment with the Greek art. We do not need to read Lessing, Flaxman, Charles Blanc and other authorities on ancient sculpture and on the Greek notion of Terpsichorean cadence to learn that the conception of the dance among the Greeks developed from the idea of repose and pose. The generous length of their draperies and the comparative primitiveness and simplicity of their music at once prove this. A statuesque race, they made the body the center of notice in dancing. The limbs served only to accommodate, to accentuate, to extend, its harmonies. The symmetry of the body did not suffer from the distracting effect of vigorously independent gesticulations of arms and legs, to say nothing of their violencies and excesses of action. Their motions were reposefully downward instead of energetically up and outward, so that they remained distinctly the expression of the body and within its range.

Under these conditions, drapery became a true and intimate companion of the gestures of the dancer, and caressed the vision of the spectator by its participation in the sports of the body and limbs—by its folds, convolutions and cascades. Terpsichore herself is represented as copiously enfolded in draperies which fall amply on the ground.

The starting point for Christian art, to speak in an imperfect way, was movement rather than repose. The new religion meant struggle, agitation. Vigorous celerity may be said to characterize things nervously modern from things reposefully Greek, and thus becomes the play which distinguishes the modern from

the ancient Terpsichorean art. Swiftness, strength, airiness, and complicated and adroit action dispute for the favor of the modern public. The attention is directed to the limbs, not the body. These traits, as we have seen, were developed only by the male dancer before Taglioni appeared. She claimed them for her sex, and added to them a classic flavor of inspiration and poetry.

In observing the evolution of the ballet-dance since her day, the attention remains confined to the danseuse. The male dancer may be dropped from notice. The ballerine has gradually improved in the matter of difficult pas and tours de force, and skilled celerity has become more and more emphasized. Of course Taglioni, and with reason, is always despairingly cited as a model of perfection for her elevation and ballon; but her celerity, being sylphlike, had little of that force and energy (to us so familiar) which come of muscled strength. She distinguished herself from her precursors by using the legs more liberally and deftly. It is precisely because she employed freely and harmoniously all parts of her person that her dance will ever remain ideal. Before her day, the ballerines sacrificed the legs to the upper half of the body, and since her time they have sacrificed the upper half, and the ensemble of the person, to the lower half.

The Terpsichorean action in the last sixty years of the century had by degrees descended exclusively to the lower limbs, and had become more athletic and virile. This is an indication of the sway which the romantic danse de demi-caractère had borne over the classic

danse noble in the decades since Taglioni. The neglect of the face, arms and body had resulted in, or was the result of, the marked decadence of the pantomime. The pantomime was insignificant at the Paris Opera toward 1900. None of the ballerines there danced very well above the hips or knew how to express herself adequately with the upper parts of the person. Mlle. Laus alone had something of the gift of mimicry.

The disuse of the upper half of the person by the danseuses in that epoch accounts, then, for the fact that the dance had lost so much of its poetic aëriality as well as so much of its pantomimic effectiveness. On the other hand, in the deft manipulations of the leg and foot, the ballerines of 1900 outrivaled the star of forty and sixty years before. The reason for this is that they relinquished almost everything to this end. Mlle. Mauri traversed regions of the terre-à-terre domains that were little explored by Taglioni and Elssler, and indulged in complications of steps of which they doubtless did not dream.

Pirouettes on the points of the toes, hardly known to Taglioni, had become in recent times the pièce de résistance of every ballerine who slipped a glissade or spread an échappé, no matter if her renown was as small as her skirt. Adice seemed to be complaining in 1859 that no one longer dared attack a double tour of pirouettes on the instep. What would he say if he saw the present generation reveling prodigally in them and in the much more difficult pirouettes on the pointes? Pointe dancing, the favorite fin de siècle variety, was evidence that the dance had to some ex-

tent descended even from the legs to the feet, since pointes test and display nothing but the glittering skill and firmness of instep and toe.

The upshot of all this is that, as indicated above, the ballet danseuse toward 1900 presented no inspired ensemble and no harmonies of action as compared with her great predecessors, because she only half observed the rule: "One should dance with the legs, and express sentiments with the rest of the person." The ballerine of eighty years before filled the mind's eye, after an evening of ballet, with the vision of a moonlit fairy, or of a graceful woman quivering under the amorous lash of impulsive music. It was from first to last an illusion born of an artistic oneness of conception meant to captivate by its air-woven, or warm-bodied, idealities.

The ballet danseuse of the latter day was apt to come out somewhat prosaically like a gymnast, as if she meant to say: "I am going to interpret some music by tours de force with my legs." She stood erect at one corner of the stage, enchained with a wonderfully expert energy her adages and pointes, wound up brusquely over in the diagonal corner, bowed, and walked away with no elegance of retreating, with no charm of dissolving view. It was an athletic performance, a feat of putting music into muscle, rather than a dream of ethereal grace. This style of the Romantic dance, in which something like acrobatism was encountered, corresponds in a measure to that decadent phase of the French Romantic school of poetry wherein rhymsters,

led by Victor Hugo himself in so many of his pages, sought to astonish by wonderful feats in verse.

As a result of the fact that the dance had evolved so noticeably into an art for the legs and feet, the pas became more varied, elaborate and perfect than ever. A word about them is essential to the present theme. The two fundamental actions of the dancer are to bend the knees and raise up to the erect posture—se plier et se relever. His first aim is to become bien placé—to become solidly seated in his attitudes and movements: to display an unwavering equilibrium.

The first five positions, in one of which the performer ordinarily stands when he begins a pas, form the scale, as it were, of the dance. From these elementary attitudes develop all the motions of the limbs outward and upward, and in two planes—either along the ground or in the air. The movements on the ground (à terre) have in nearly every instance their duplicate in the air (en l'air), or temps sautés (leaped) —as dégagés-à-terre, dégagés en l'air; ronds-de-jambe-à-terre and en l'air. But en l'air in this part of the ritual virtually means not higher than the ankle or knee (demi-hauteur), though the performer may transport these actions higher in the air if he wishes. The training of the limbs for supple strength and gracefulness consists of "detaching" them from the body. This is accomplished by the exercises of the dégagés, ronds-de-jambe, pliés, the first lessons in pointes, and all kinds of battements.

After these come the adages which constitute the

principal part of the dance. They are sometimes called développés because they are, one may say, developments from the first five positions, and also from all the elementary motions which admit of being transposed into the air. The adages develop either à la seconde position (straight out at the side) or à la quatrième devant (straight out in front), or à la quatrième derrière (straight out behind). The adages are multiple and embrace, if need be, the outermost and uppermost reaches of the limbs.

Nevertheless the adages are largely attitudes, for here the arms come into full play and combine with the whole person in harmonious actions and postures, whence arise all the poses, développés ouverts and croisés, arabesques, and, indeed, pirouettes. There are innumerable pirouettes.

The above movements form the framework of the dance. They are followed by various little series of tours or pas which, on the whole, really leave the distinct domain of exercises, express bits of sentiments and moods, and interpret phrases of music. The most usual of these pas are glissades, échappés, coupés, jettés, brisés, assemblés, fouettés, pas de bourrée, cabrioles, soubresauts, entrechats.

There are entrechats-3, -4, -5, -6, -8. Entrechats-8 (separating the feet four times and bringing them together as many times while leaping from one of the first five positions) are quite a rare feat. Blasis, writing in 1830, said that entrechats had been performed as high as 14. Vazquez made them at 14 in private. Entrechats-6 are the variety usually produced on the

stage, being less difficult and at the same time more brilliant than entrechats-8.

All the pas now mentioned constitute the whole technic—the whole mechanism—of the dance, and therefore they belong as well to the danse de demi-caractère as to the danse noble. Pirouettes on the pointes are the most modern of the regular pas. It appears that the first pirouette of any sort ever seen in Paris was whirled in 1766, and was imported from Stuttgart. It was simply a pirouette on the flat of the foot. A dancer may turn eight pirouettes on the instep, although only the first four can be turned well. He may turn three pirouettes on the pointes, yet only the first two can be achieved satisfactorily.

Pointes are the most steely and glittering of pas, but the general supposition that they are the most difficult is erroneous. More trying on the many resources of the danseuse are the temps parcourus when skillfully varied in rapid successions of modest, unanticipated tours, and also the batterie when beaten brilliantly back and forth across the stage, and also the ballon when floated swiftly and loftily hither and thither. In the temps parcourus, at the same time, there is much less visible athleticism and more of the spontaneous poetry of motion than in the pointe. They give the most scope to the possibilities of the gracefully unexpected; for it is the pleasure of agreeable surprise which constitutes the great charm in all art.

A danseuse is not recognized as a danseuse noble because of certain pas, but because she has a dominating presence, elevation, and a high and light ballon.

Either regal majesty of bearing or airy elevation of movement must characterize her. The ballon of Taglioni will never be equaled, at least in reputation.

A danseuse de demi-caractère, in her turn, is not recognized as such by certain pas, but because she lacks the traits of appearance, and the aërialty, of the danseuse noble. She is always shorter than the latter and less distinguished in presence; yet she is warmer, more individualistic, and has entrain. Her parcours depends on her pliable energies and is thus distinguished from that of the longer limbed, lofty danseuse noble. Also her batterie must have a fiery force to hold its own with the more elevated batterie of her classic rival.

To lower the pointes well—to alight on the toe and then on the heel, instead of on the flat foot—is necessary in a good batterie. The dancer whose lower limbs are en dehors (knees turned out) is capable of the most brilliant batterie, for his legs cross at the ankles instead of higher up, form a larger oval opening, and thus, letting the day penetrate fully between, make the most of the light and shade effects, or what is called the chiaroscuro of the dance.

Of course it is quite true that the danse de demi-caractère claims properly and solely all character pas, and also all the national dances such as the Italian tarantella—the most rapid of dances—and the Fourlane of the Venetian gondoliers; the Spanish bolero and cachucha, and the famous fandango—the swiftest and one of the oldest of the Spanish movements; the Polish cracovienne, the tyrolienne, la Russe, and so on. Yet a danseuse noble, in the last generation, was apt to

illustrate these character features, since the distinction between *noble* and *caractère* was not then so much respected as formerly. Adice was scolding in 1859 because the genres had become interlaced, and exclaimed: "One great reason why Taglioni succeeded so well was, not that she was better formed or that her pas were inimitable, but that she adopted the danse noble and kept to it!"

Any chapter on pas closes with a long list of them representing the highest artistic possibilities of the dance as a difficult combination of grace and vigor, and as an interpretation of melody. An opera-ballet and usually a grand opera have one or more celebrated pas. They are an ambitious linking together of steps and poses which express a strain of music in the full variety of its meaning. There are, for instance, the pas de tyrolienne in "William Tell," the pas de fascination in "Robert le Diable," the pas des abeilles in "la Juive."

Indeed, the Meyerbeer opera, which came into glory in Taglioni's day, is notable for its grand scenes of ballet and, consequently, its pas. Among such subsequent conceptions in France are the pas de sabotière and the masterly Breton Gigue in "la Korrigane," preceded in "Coppélia" by the pas de la poupée which has the loveliest fame of all the pas which have been created in Paris in later times.

Such enchainments of action are conceived to delineate gayety, passion, sorrow, and even death as illustrated in the scene of death in "la Source," where, as has been said, the spectator is scarcely able to retain his tears. Were one a Symbolist, he would perhaps

hold that pas represent colors, and that, characteristically, the pas of Mlle. Mauri were red and those of Mlle. Subra, pale green and peach. Paul Renouard, taking the theater lights into view, has executed some designs in which he rendered a pirouette croisée by amethyst and flesh tint, a joyous leap in the air by yellow and mauve, an arabesque ouverte by faint green and lilac. Thus one observes how descriptive taste and artistic refinement enter into the realm of the pas, and how varied are the possibilities of the ballet dance.

In the evolution, since the epoch of Taglioni, of the Terpsichorean art into the lower limbs, they became latterly the protruding means of developing its esthetic features. The decadent pantomime, losing its simpler ideality and poetry, had more or less disappeared, as we have noted, from the upper half and the ensemble of the person into the skillful feats and complicated interpretations of the lower half.

This leads up to the question of grace. The word grace generally refers to charm of motion, or of motion briefly arrested in poses, not to mere physical symmetry or that beauty of outline and feature which predominates, and constitutes the attraction, in the usual "beautiful woman." It is apparent that this is the meaning proper to the art of the dance. Grace of motion and grace of motion checked momentarily in its flights, rather than elegance of form or perfection of limb, distinguish the dance from the plastic and static world of sculpture. The thought in the one is on movement, in the other on repose.

Now there appears to be a grace which belongs to

e ordinary actions of life, to the everyday world of e home, the salon, the streets; and there is another ecies of grace, the Terpsichorean type, which sug-sts mythological or romantic characters and trans-:es ballet music, and which a danseuse must manifest order to triumph. In the grace of common actions—the salon grace, we may say—the French, by uni-rsal consent, surpass; yet they are not the most ideal ncers either in ballet or ballroom. Their grace—in neasure circumscribed and saccadée, and wherein the ny framework of the body is in evidence as is natural a Northern race—does not expand and lend itself th a whole-souled irresistibleness to the passion of sic. The great dancers of both sexes in France have ne, in nearly every instance, from the supple, free-bed, unossified south.

his salon grace, then, does not appear to be a isite for ballet dancing. Taglioni is said to have ayed little of it in private life. The dance is con-d only with Terpsichorean elegance; and beauty, hould give way before it, for the most exquisite is usually, or at least very frequently, found in s who are physically unprepossessing. Herein : seems disposed to follow the law of compensa-The epoch-making ballerines have by no means ry beautiful women. Indeed it is claimed that :e reacts against the desire for beauty, because ncing, while developing elegance of movement, t destroys the symmetry of face and bust, since drag downward the upper half of the person. rse agreeable features and symmetrical out-

lines of body and limb are necessary to a certain degree in a bayadère, and perfection is reached when perfect form is wedded to perfect grace; but Terpsichore means dancing first and comeliness afterward. Ballet music is to be rendered by motion, not by beauty. Hence the dance becomes decadent as soon as beauty is made to go before grace. Many a veritable sylph has been obliged to retire from the stage because she possessed erratic lineaments; still one cares relatively little whether a singer has an exaggerated nose or mouth provided he is gifted with a rare voice. Likewise, regularity of feature should not be exacted in a woman who has a divine grace of dance.

The fact that there are always many danseuses on the stage who have little grace may be explained, in part at least. A danseuse should begin training about the age of eight. Very crude of action are the eight-year-old girls of the common people, for it is of the common classes that most ballerines come. It appears impossible to foretell whether a tiny maid may turn into a graceful danseuse. Herein the art of the dance is held to be unlike that of singing. The professor of song knows that his young pupil has an ear for music and at least something of a voice. But the girl who wishes to attempt the dance may present no trace whatever of elegance, and eventually be able to transform herself at pleasure into an idyl of lovely motion; or she may have grace at first and yet develop after a year's training into nothing save inelegance.

It results that she is accepted on presentation as a pupil if she has good health and good proportions.

Thus many danseuses, to whom grace has been rather severely denied, become sujets, because they have toiled faithfully and are not uncomely The case of Léontine Beaugrand is a favorable example of the discriminating taste of the Parisians. She was adored by them for her elegance of motion and consummate knowledge of the dance, in spite of the fact that she was quite small and had a very prominent nose.

One would find it difficult to prove that beauty is to-day a greater obstacle in the path of Terpsichorean grace than in the year 1830; but it is obviously true that the supremacy of grace in ballet dancing suffered somewhat from the fact that the modern art became comparatively one of athletic tours de force with the legs. The French of the later epoch probably craved, more than their grandfathers, displays of nervous energy and vigorous rapidity; and grace was therefore of rather less consideration than formerly. A dancer does not, can not, give such heed to elegance of movement when executing a feat that would test the powers of a professional gymnast, as when performing simple and slow evolutions.

It can be very well claimed that there was as much grace presented in the ballet in 1900 as ever, but that it was of a different sort and expressed in a different manner. One may urge that it was grace of *caractère* rather than of the *noble* and classic type, and was less supremely apparent to the casual observer because it was more technical and complicated and subject to more difficult conditions. It is nevertheless certain, as will be seen farther on, that, if there were not an actual

decadence in grace, the ballet, in the present epoch having improved in other ways, depended less for success on mere elegance of action than ever before.

The great crucial test for a dancer is his posture when in the air and not when he is on the ground, for most dancers nowadays move very well on the ground. But rare indeed is the performer who en l'air adopts the proper attitude and grace of pose.

Another crucial test for a dancer is his profile. However graceful and skilled his dancing when viewed from the front, his profile is apt to prove an awkward and unpleasant spectacle. A ballet seen in action from the side is nearly always an ungainly sight, even if it present a charming appearance when facing the public. A dancer should be graceful when observed from any direction. It is in the matter of profile and attitude in air that the French professional, although he may dance acceptably in front and à terre, is almost sure to be inferior to an Italian or a Spaniard, because he is of a harder framework.

A performer like Vazquez, a Spaniard, was almost as agreeable when seen in profile, or in air, as in front, since he offered nothing but soft curves and mellow poses. The danseuse of 1900 was sadly neglectful of her movements and attitudes on the stage when not dancing, because she detailed pas rather than embodied rôles. Even if one only dances pas, she should stand, walk and listen gracefully instead of lounging about and holding herself together in a prosaic or banal manner.

It may be noted, in passing, that the spectator, who

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With the growth of the Romantic and the Realistic schools, however, dance music for the theater indulged more and more in picturesque sentiment, took on more of substance and reality, and cultivated a more intimate footing with the danseuse and her art. The result was the perfection of ballet music, as all dancers call it—that of the late Léo Délibes. His music visualizes the ballerine: it presents her corporeally to the senses. He possessed what the French term physical sensibilities, and could mold music into the palpable charms of woman. He had, simply, the grace of contours and of plasticity, as had Gautier.

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It was irreproachably proper, like her dance, being essentially the traditional garment of women. Still, as already noted, it was shorter and more convex than that of her less decorous precursors whom Vestris taught.

As the dance has gradually lowered into the legs, the costume of necessity has become shorter, more stiffly convex and stands farther away from the body, in order not to interfere with the action of the lower limbs. The ballet skirts are shorter and more convexly horizontal than ever because the legs are employed with more expert vigor. While the costume has ascended from below, it has at the same time descended on the waist, so that it covers much less of the person than formerly.

The typical convex ballet skirt of the later time is in no sense ideal. It is wholly without the pale of the graceful and the picturesque. An ideal costume should follow the lines of the body, hide its shortcomings, blend its parts, soften its effects, and appear as if natural to the wearer. The unloveliness of the contemporary ballet toilet as a thing of artistic meaning and beauty is only accentuated when clapped around the waist like an inverted soup-tureen, and thus is made to destroy the outlines of the wearer's form. For it cuts the body hopelessly into two parts, each possessing two members, and gives the limbs the appearance of dangling and scurrying about as if the action of the arms had as little relation as possible to that of the legs. It emphasizes defects, which must be industriously corrected by "splicing," and induces the ballerine to be careless of her walk and bearing when not danc-

ing. It is because the danseur wears a costume which discloses distinctly the whole contour of the person that he carries himself, as has been remarked, much better on the stage, when not performing, than the danseuse.

The masculine attire is more favorable for this purpose than even the Taglioni dress, since the latter garb hid so much of the outline of the body. The present convex skirts are especially destructive of the effects of the danse noble. They tend to dissipate its nobility and weigh down on its loftiness and aëriality, because they are neither, on the one hand, queenly nor, on the other, vertical and soaringly balloon-like.

And so the old-time, the old-fashioned, lover of Taglioni's style would say: "One excess results from another. Your excess of dancing in the legs has developed an outrage in the way of a costume." No other toilet seems possible so long as the dance remains largely one of the lower limbs, and so long as the spectator demands the skirt even in the reminiscent and abortive form of the present jupe de tulle. The difficulty arises from trying to adjust the notion of the skirt to the idea of vigorous action for the legs.

Yet the members of the ballet as well as the public seem unwilling to part with this garment. Few suggestions, however lovely, of terraces and cascades of ribbons and roses as a substitute around the waist and hips for the jupe, evoke aught but exclamations of terror from the ballet danseuse, for she shuns travesty and the thought of being divorced from any hint of the petticoat. Greek art offers no solution of the problem,

since the Greeks did not deal with expert motions in the legs. Even the meager garb of Diana of Versailles would not serve, because its alternate flappings, cleavings, to the body lines would annoy the danseuse and prove homely. It is only meant for walking and running as befits the goddess of the chase.

Nothing can apparently be done but to make the latter day inartistic garment as delectable a sight as may be; and indeed never before recent times have there been expended and displayed on the toilet of the ballerine so much money and taste and such varieties of material and color. The result is not wholly without success as was seen sometimes in the attires of Mlle. Subra, and occasionally in certain caprices of the ballet costume. The convex skirt has, it is true, some redeeming points. It traces the waist firmly and daintily, thereby giving more prominence to the bust and more daintiness to the whole person. It hides the graceless bulge at the hips, and has the practical effect of throwing the lower limbs boldly into relief as is proper in a dance of the legs.

Furthermore, one errs in fancying that its shortness and convex horizontalness are ascribable to a liking, often gratuitously said to be greater now than in the year 1830, for equivocal display. They are due to the necessity of freer leg action; and the expert vigorousness of motion tends to correct the hint of impropriety because, as in the case of the female acrobats in tights, the attention is occupied with the dexterity and variety of the evolutions and feats. Still the fact must not be

ignored that this costume can more naturally be made to contribute to any unseemly motives of brazen-bodied danseuses than the Taglioni dress which, while not artistically beautiful, suggested a virgin pudency quite puritanic.

There is one variety of the skirt of to-day which should be discountenanced. It is the one which reaches some three feet away from the body so that the wearer appears to be a kind of St. Patrick's cross frisking about on one end. This is both unlovely and ridiculous. The lower border of the costume should not stand out farther than two feet at most, so as not to interfere seriously with the main idea in the appearance of the human form, namely, that its significance and beauty proceed first of all from its perpendicularity.

But costumes are only appendages to the dance. Its master spirit is music. The dance expresses to the eye what ballet melodies speak of to the ear. The dance music of the Greeks was comparatively rudimentary, and the ballet in France, before the time of Taglioni, was in general indifferently favored by Euterpe. Music is essentially a nineteenth century art. It administers better than the other arts to the modern nervous love for complicated energies and muscled rapidities.

One is tempted to say that it is the grand opera of our era which made possible the Augustan period of the ballet. Precisely when Rossini, Meyerbeer and their compeers came into glory with the grandiose Romantic opera, ballet dancing commenced its great flight with Taglioni in the tyrolienne of "William Tell." How-

ever, Taglioni's style demanded the more classically turned scores of that day, for it was comparatively a simple and light design of enlacing arabesques.

If one inquire closely into the nature of the transformation in ballet music since Taglioni's day, he will probably remark that it has proceeded along three general lines. First, there has developed the disposition to weave meshy harmonies in such rapid and convoluted successions that the danseuse, in one tour of pas, is forced to link together several different sentiments. She has not merely to "trace the ciphers of love" (to quote a madrigal phrase of the Louis XIV era) along the simple cadences of a neat, distinct melody, she must also execute responses to the more labyrinthine moods and tremendous fancies of a modern orchestra of a hundred and twenty musicians with its occasional masses of crashing sounds. She must confront and match its tours de force with her tours de force of lower limb.

Thus it is but natural that she dreads to buffet in opera the great billows of harmony which roll up over the footlights, and that she always prays for simple scores. Ballet-music has never been so highly developed and so technically and beautifully effective as in the present epoch. And this is coincident with the evolution of the dance into more intricate vigors and, therefore, into the legs. For the legs and feet can interpret more expertly and literally than the body and arms the complexities of the modern partition with its varied and realistic authority and its sensuous courtship of romantic ideality.

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seuse is doing. It scrapes courtesies with her, it ignites her fancies into flamboyant développés, it caresses the outlines of her more suave moods. Never sensual, but ever richly, at times exquisitely, sensuous, his music is of and for the ballet. The danseuse is always enthusiastic over Délibes, for he lived in her domains, he understood her and her vocation, and his music sympathetically, captivatingly, insists on developing in her all the possibilities of Terpsichore. And this is the case even if she has only memory and not a passion for music; for a ballerine need not have an ear for melody, although it is unquestionably better that she should.

Among the famous ballets seen in France between 1829 and 1863 were "la Sylphide," "la Fille du Danube," "Giselle," "la Péri." Since then have been created in Paris for the danse noble, "la Source" and "Sylvia," each by Délibes; and for the danse de demi-caractère, "Coppélia," by Délibes. "Coppélia" is the delicious triumph of French ballets. Its libretto is from an experienced pen; and its mounting was the last work of Saint-Léon, by far the greatest of French choregraphers.

Very little of the music of the celebrated opera-ballets of other days was performed toward 1900 in Paris. The memories of the danseuses of that epoch were idolized, and their composers unremembered. But Délibes was immortalized, and already the creators of his rôles were almost forgotten. Music seemed in a measure to have eclipsed the ballet star. And not without reason, for one perhaps fancies some

scores of modern ballet music more than any dancing.

There is an irresistible strain in "Coppélia" (Délibes, 1870) which echoes, in the realm of the ballerine, what became a characteristic note in French poetry about 1865. It is a strain of incurable love wherein delicious energies thrill and spiritedly leap forth with refined brilliancy and then, stricken gently but hopelessly back in a decadent chord, recede in the anemic ecstasies of a distinguished heartache—in languors that elegantly isolate until they forsake one in exquisite forlornness. In the evolution of French ballet music, "Coppélia" is also the first and most seductive scene of *night* music. It perfectly reflects its environment—evenings of ballet at the opera. It loses much of its charm if played afternoons in a park. It is not for daylight, for it shares in the sensuousness of lighted stage and in the insinuations of perfumed loges.

To enjoy ballet dancing thoroughly one should not only have an ear for music but be able to some extent to appreciate its phrases and moods. Otherwise he cannot understand how human movements mold the meaning of the orchestra; he cannot fully delight in those refined sensations which are born of the hymen of the grace of music and the grace of motion. Each note calls for an action (un temps) or a pose, each phrase for a pas, each strain for a chaining together of evolutions and attitudes. A trained musical ear is more necessary to-day than ever for the spectator.

Yet there is, among the average onlookers at an opera, scarcely one person in five hundred who has a knowledge and an intelligent conception of Terpsi-

chorean grace, who knows when a danseuse is correctly interpreting the music, and who thrills with enlightened pleasure when she really melts into its embraces. It is safe to say that the ballet, at its best, affords something of this cultured entertainment to not more than thirty persons among the two thousand who frequent the Grand Opera in Paris. For not only are the refining aspects of the theater dance difficult to appraise, but its unfavorable features and its imperfections are always strikingly apparent. To many people it seems a meaningless, graceless spectacle wherein men and women are grimacing and kicking about. Perhaps Ruskin had this in mind, among other things, when he branded with his righteous pen the modern "mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping pins, out of which [he believed] nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis."

One is prepared now to pose intelligently the question for the year 1900, Was the ballet then in decadence? Every one seemed to be saying that it was. Distinguished musical critics like Weber of "Le Temps" took this for granted. Even the ballet battalion at the Paris Opera professed to share this opinion. They declared that there were no dancers any more; the professors of the dance claimed that there were none left in their classes; and the Paris master of the ballet himself insisted with refreshing modesty that there were no masters of the ballet in his epoch.

But all this should not necessarily mislead one, for every generation has clamored about the degeneracy of the ballet. Adice, writing toward the year 1860,

ed its fallen condition; Saint-Léon treated of the
nce of the dance in a well-written essay in 1856;
ere were critics who were complaining of the
hing between 1830 and 1840. And yet that
is looked back upon as the golden age of the

en the decadence of the ballet was spoken of
l 1900, decadence of the pantomime was un-
usly meant. The two are not the same thing.
tomime the attention is on the dumb show; in
llet, it is on the dancing. "Coppélia," for in-
is sometimes called a ballet-pantomime because
s acting in it, but it is properly a ballet, and is
designated as such by savants in the art, since
erest attaches to the pas as pleasing, dexterous
etations of music. A ballet may be either purely
t dansé, or it may be a mixed ballet wherein the
ime is outshone by the dancing.

pantomime, it is true, was in decadence, but the
as a whole could not be said to have been. Sev-
atures made up its charm: first and mainly, the
g (with its frequent pantomimic effects), then
sic, and then the accessories of costume and
r. By dividing the modern era of the ballet into
ual epochs—1829 to 1863, and 1863 to 1897—
n clearly and fairly discover what features have
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s to pantomime, shares naturally, in the second
in the general decline of the pantomime.

refore, as seen above, the ballet was notably in
nce in the use of the upper and the more panto-

mimic part of the body, and in the art of producing graceful effects and ideal conceptions with the whole person—that is to say, with the ensemble of the dancer as embodied in a rôle. And then the danseuses of the second epoch will never be so famous and seem so incomparable to posterity as those of the first epoch, and justly so notwithstanding the comparative lack in the latter of adroitness and pas; for the first epoch was marvelously fertile in inspired artists of the dance who were unique in the various styles which they conceived.

In other aspects the ballet was superior in the second period toward 1900. The legs and feet were far more skilled, and consequently the pas were more expert. The star of 1900 could render, literally and perfectly, a more intricate score of music than could any of her famous predecessors. Even in the indifferent ballet "la Maladetta," created at the Grand Opera in Paris about 1893, it was edifying to see how completely and effectively every mood of the orchestra was expressed by a tour de pas. For it is notably herein, as indicated above with respect to Délibes, that the best dance music of latter times surpasses. It is ballet music written to be danced by women. The motives and harmonies are wedded to a pas; they are more sympathetic and colored, and are apt to be more distinguished in sentiment than the musical themes for Terpsichore in the earlier epoch.

In passing, one may note Gounod's melodious ballet music, and also that of Massenet whose style, though unlike Gounod's, is frequently entrancing for the dance, since he makes up for rich coloring and plasticity by

his finely-wrought sensuousness and ravishingly complicated energy. His music is to be criticized at times for certain tints of sensualism. Voluptuousness taints the charm in the ballet as quickly as in any other art. The sensuality of his scores, however, is of a most refined and mentalized type.

Along with the development in ballet music, and also in pas and in the improvement of their execution, there is to be noted again the increased taste and elegance displayed toward 1900 in costuming, notwithstanding the refractoriness which the typical ballet skirt of our epoch manifests toward artistic loveliness. Likewise, incredible progress was shown in the matter of scenery. To understand how immeasurably superior the stage appointments are at present compared with those of Taglioni's day, the reader need but peruse the criticism of Castil-Blaze in 1832 on the innovations in stage decorations. Primitive attempts were then just being made to substitute material objects representing trees, rocks, houses, for merely painted scenes shoved across the stage in sight of the spectators.

Castil-Blaze put his naïve complaints and curious logic into this language: "The new system of decorations at the Opera takes away all the magic, because it does not permit the change of scene to be accomplished in view. These big, solid objects destroy the perspective. The more *material* the decorations, the farther will they be from the truth. The canvases painted by the Italians succeed each other on the stage with rapidity, and are better than all these mountains whose construction requires three quarters of an hour."

As for the corps de ballet, it is probably not so severely disciplined to-day as in the earlier epoch, but this is due in a certain sense to its progress, in that it is much larger than formerly and has to achieve more difficult tours. For the pas must be easy to permit a corps de ballet to perform with precision and in perfect unison. It is agreed that the ballet in Paris toward 1900 was not trained so thoroughly as in Milan or Vienna.

Thus it is to be remarked that, while that epoch had no Taglioni nor Elssler, no Cerrito nor Rosati, although the star of 1900 was more skilled in pas and in mere dancing than they, it contributed, and with all that this means, a matchless masterpiece in the form of a ballet—"Coppélia." The comparative decline of the star toward 1900 was, taken alone, a sign of decadence in the dance, just as was the intermixing of genres. Yet her decline was to be explained by the fact that while she had been formerly the cynosure in the ballet (and this furnishes the reason why one famous ballerine formerly succeeded another so rapidly in public favor), the center of attention was distributed in the 1890's between the incomparable skill of pas and the surpassing effects of the immense corps de ballet and of the music and decorations.

Therefore a danseuse like Mlle. Mauri could remain so long in reign. The star was yet a great attraction, though no longer the exclusive one. Her art at the same time had become in a sense more of an expert business and less of a caprice and inspiration.

But looking at the matter broadly, the decline of

the star did not necessarily evidence a decadence of the ballet. Saint-Léon wrote in 1856 that her glory had begun to fade and that the ballet d'ensemble would again come in vogue. It has been noticed above that Taglioni drove the ballet d'ensemble from the stage by concentrating all the attention on herself. With her the star, not the ballet, became the object of interest, and this was doubtless looked upon by many in her time as a decline of the ballet into the sensations of a single ballerine.

Hence, traditionally and logically, the ballet as seen in the last generation of the century was nearer the complete conception of the term than at any time since Taglioni, because no one feature was significantly sacrificed to another. It was the regular ballet d'ensemble wherein the simple evolutions of the quadrilles shared honors with the displays of the star. One seems therefore wholly justified in concluding, after averaging all its aspects in the length and breadth of their meaning, that the ballet in 1900 excelled, or at least held its own with, that of any other epoch.

It would be idle, even if the decadence of the ballet were a fact, to treat it as if a return to the art of Taglioni's decade were either possible or desirable. Modern spectators, lovers of complicated Romantic effects and nervously adroit energies, would soon find Taglioni tame in one of her great rôles.

The men of the present time crave rightly enough the grace and the ideal of a warmer, more colorful, more vigorous type than our grandfathers knew of. The dancing in the latter's day was comparatively cold

and distant. As the Parisians of the modern epoch prefer orchestral harmonies to simple melodies, so they prefer grand enchainments of dexterous pas to the simple rôles of classic grace. They romanesquely love the fougue of richly developed music and evolutions instead of the slow and white cameo elegance of simple adagios. This explains why the professor of the dance to-day keeps exclaiming to his pupil: "More vigor! More fire!" and not: "More repose! More elegance!" The generation of 1900, to speak comparatively, had lost taste for simple mythological grace, for formal correctness, and for cool poetry in the Terpsichorean art; and it had gained in the fondness for the execution of pas, and for variety and entrain.

The ballet in France had not declined in 1900. It had simply transformed and, on the whole, improved. And it was less difficult to determine this than to have said what transformations it was then passing through. It might have seemed that pointe dancing was beginning to go out of favor a little, yet one was scarcely justified in hazarding even this statement. Pointes have been so long *the* feature with the ballerine, and are detailed so prominently as the ultimate achievement of the dance, that it would be natural if the public inclined at length to weary of them.

The latter-day audience, full of the love for immensities and masses, was doubtless more disposed than its predecessors to prefer, to single danseuses, companies of them—several performers executing a pas in unison and with "linear perfection." Genuine applause is always awakened by ten or twelve ballerines accur-

ately lined down the stage in the single pose of an arabesque ouverte, while this elementary attitude in one ballerine is scarcely noticed.

Such a growing preference for groups would be associated with the relative decadence of the star, and would seem to be proven by the increasing size of ballets,* and also by the magnificent sceneries of our epoch, since groups alone give display to grand stage effects. This taste for clusters of danseuses showed a wholesome fondness for the simpler phases of the dancing art, in contrast with the complex admiration which the virtuosity of a star cultivates in the spectator.

It was a question three generations ago whether men are needed in the dance. Their number was first diminished in the ballet at the Paris Opera in 1832, while at the same time the number of danseuses was increased. It was about 1846 that the rôles of men began to be taken there by women. Mlle. Sangalli called notice in the 1870's to the fact that some people held the male dancer indispensable, and others thought him useless, since his rôles could be assumed by women in his guise. She said: "My opinion is that man is absolutely necessary in a ballet. He contrasts with the grace and beauty of woman in a more effective way than travesty permits. But while I maintain that he is indispensable in the pas d'ensemble and in groups, I maintain that he is useless in the soli."

One readily agrees with the above, though it is

* The regular ballet at the Grand Opera in Paris consisted in 1900 of two stars, forty sujets and petits sujets, twenty coryphées, three mimes, forty members of the two quadrilles, and upward of a hundred other persons.

preferable that the male dancer be retained in one or two of the soli of a ballet. He may not be especially interesting to male spectators, but he may be to women. Furthermore, it is the general opinion that the stars and the sujets should be drilled by men rather than by women. Mlle. Mauri in the 1890's was emphatic on this point. The most efficient professor is the man who teaches well and dances better than even a star. All the ballet queens of former times were educated by famous male dancers. Women as professors of sujets were then unknown, while latterly at the Opera in Paris there were only one or two men teaching. This shows how the dance in France has passed into the hands of women. It has made progress on the whole; still there are great opportunities for improvement, and more men as professors would doubtless lead to this.

By abandoning altogether the solo male dancer, the art of masculine dancing would be lost, and the absence of its imposing vigor would doubtless be regrettable for more reasons than one. No artist of either sex at the Opera in Paris in the 1890's married vigor and grace so well as Vazquez; no one presented such a perfect profile as he nor took such model attitudes when launched in air. To do away with the danseur or efface him into mere rôles of accompaniment where he only tosses up the danseuse—a performance usually exaggerated—would tend to make the ballet more lax in discipline and would have removed, in this instance, a man who doubtless surpassed, when supple rapidity, virile elegance and skillful pas are considered, any

male dancer known to Terpsichorean literature. It is true there was in his time no agitation of the above question; but male dancers in the classic ballet continue to be passing from public favor, and relatively fewer of them were of late employed in soli at the Paris Opera.

As a general comment with which to approach the close of this essay, it may be said that the modern cult of the body for health and beauty might be advantageously extended more and more from the domains of mere athletics to the ballet realms of refined grace and elegant vigor. This is the practical object of the dance.

As for the spiritual part, one may hazard the saying of the philosopher Jouffroy that the dance "makes souls appear by means of the body." And, indeed, those who think the dance necessarily sacrifices the head to the feet might be enlightened by perusing a forgotten little book by a danseuse named Mademoiselle Michelet, entitled "Bluettes antimondaines d'une danseuse," wherein the author reverently promenades back and forth in serious philosophical disquisitions on religion with as much ease as she doubtless displayed in her ballon and temps parcourus.

Since 1900 the ballet or opera dance has departed with quite a radical completeness from what has been shown in the preceding pages with reference to the past century. The Classic ballets—the danse noble as exhibited by Subra—are retained for those operas for which they were written. They are not being developed. They appear to be a fixed and past type.

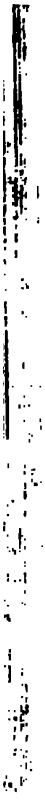
The Romantic ballets—the danse de demi-caractère as represented by Mauri—have, however, been remarkably developed since 1900 and are still being developed in fashions which are not only extraordinary from almost every standpoint but are almost beyond criticism. For originality, variety, ingenuity, color, beauty, natural human grace the contemporary Russian types surpass the most extravagant dreams of the nineteenth century.

Its ballets now seem much restricted, much clothed, artificial, thus still attaching to the restrained traditions of antiquity. But our present-day publics are, by contrast, unperturbedly accustomed to bare feet, bare legs and greatly bared bodies, which lend a wholesome natural freedom and grace in ways that would have shocked past generations.

Bare feet preclude pointe (or toe) dancing which was the revelation and marvel of the nineteenth century ballets. Pointe dancing is and likely always will be the most exacting feature of the dance, since it must be begun in childhood and requires a long and severe training. Most of the present popular dancers cannot dance on the toes and are, therefore, only at best semi-professionals. The great modern professionals like Pavlova can perform on the pointes as well as in every other mode. Pointe dancing must seemingly be retained along with the new barefoot forms in order to denote a strictly first class art.

As France was the perfected home of the nineteenth century ballets, so is Russia the perfected home of what promises to be the twentieth century models.

iv. The Sociological Rôle of the Forest



HE SOCIOLOGICAL RÔLE OF THE FOREST

In Fontainebleau. August.

THESE outlines for a speculative essay have been noted down as I pass the hours under these beautiful beeches and heroic pines, and ecall in comparison the effaced stateliness of the Valois ompiègne and the green of Soignies.

Historically, Fontainebleau can well be called the ost important of all woods, as will be readily attested y the readers of the history of Napoleon, of the rench Courts and, indeed, of nearly all French epochs. n the arts this identical forest's associations are rela- vely as prominent. Not to speak alone of the Barbi- on school which nestled in these borders, scores of ell-known artists and littérateurs have had and have eir homes here or near by. For literature, too, has en enriched by the soul of Fontainebleau. A very rge number of great personages in varied walks of fe have here sought seclusion in sojourn or residence. ot only political and religious events and military ovements but many famous hunting parties, high so- al functions, romantic episodes, picturesque love af- irs of note, have claimed this spot for their own.

All this has been often celebrated and by many a asterly pen and brush. But of Fontainebleau's won- rful and charming example in a sociological rôle,

little has been said for the general reader. In this respect these woods are scarcely less notable, identified as they are with the course of human development and valuable as a thing of loveliness and as a carefully nurtured product of man's highest nature.

To bring out this scantily recognized aspect, the few following pages are sketched in the way of suggestive contemplation.

Of the earth's four great surface features termed the sea, the mountain, the forest and the plain, the last does not appear to have been Nature's source of, or background to, any of the later leading civilizations or any controlling civilizing factor or race sentiment. The mountain seems to have inspired, or become associated with, merely the sentiment of political freedom—the love of physical independence. And this has only been true in modern times, for the Greeks and Romans scarcely recognized mountains as the origin of any notable and practical kind of inspiration. For that matter, Holland, whose mountains are its beffrois, has played at least as prominent a part as Switzerland in the history of political liberty. This comparatively narrow rôle of the mountains is doubtless ascribable to their sparse and more or less remote population, and to the difficulties they offer to human intercommunication.

Thus notice is drawn at once to the sea and to the forest as the great physiographical backgrounds of the later civilizations. It occurs immediately to us to say that the sea, rather than the forest, lay back of the

Greek and Roman cults of enlightenment. The prominent Nature-basis of the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Æneid, and of the Hellenic and the Roman history and mythology, is the sea. Athens and Rome were near the borders of a large water. The chief modern European capitals, on the contrary, are inland amidst forestal interiors. When, in the Middle Ages, civilization began its new life north in mid-Europe, it was natural that the forest should supplant the sea as the physiographical basis of sociological development. And this appears indeed true: the forest is the mise-en-scène for the epic of Charlemagne, and for the action of the whole distinctively modern civilization.

Before attempting to sketch the theme of the sociological contrasts of sea and forest, it would be well perhaps to agree, for the sake of clearness and brevity, that the two words ancients and ancient shall refer to the Greeks and Romans; and that the terms neo-ancients and neo-ancient shall designate the Roman Catholics and their church, since it is the direct successor of the old Roman religion and preserves visible traces of many of the Latin forms, rites and traditions, while evidencing that especial devotion to unity and beauty which is ever the mark of the ancient civilization. And by the words modern and modernity we shall signify that which is to be distinguished as modern—all moral, intellectual and art revolts, revolutions and important changes which have sprung from or characterize the later Europe, and not Greece or ancient Rome.

In considering the relation of the sea and the forest to the arts in their usual order, we note that we com-

monly think of the Gothic as the significantly modern type of architecture. And what is a Gothic cathedral, as is so often pointed out, but a bit of grand forest petrified? There is a succession of Gothic churches on either hand as we walk through the woods. The trees, stretching away in semblance of rows, are the columns, and they unfold skyward into the vault of Heaven, just as the pillars of a cathedral upfurl into the arching roof. You see alleys for aisles, copses for chapels, and glades for the interceptions of nave and transept. The branches, sprigs, leaves and the fretted top of a forest —all in their aspiring tendency upward—are Nature's prototypes for the fragile, lacelike Gothic groined vaults, pinnacles. A wood, with its masses of sorrowful religious shade cheered up by light from above, exemplifies the interior of a Gothic church.

The forest, that is to say the tree, is architectural in principle. It has a variety that is harmonious and chordal and that blends with the majesty of the whole. If Ruskin's definitions of symmetry and proportion are acceptable—"The property of a tree in sending out equal branches on opposite sides is symmetrical; its sending out shorter and smaller toward the top, proportional"—we remark how the sea could not well be the Nature-source of inspiration for Gothic architecture, because the sea typifies least of all the proportional.

But the forest (the tree) does prefigure the modern Gothic tendency to upwardness, or more specifically the idea of verticalness, which is the main principle of proportion. In contrast, the architecture of the an-

cients, like the sea, is characterized by the horizontal, not the vertical—by levels, not heights. The prevailing sense of levelness in the ancients was the expression of, or accompaniment to, their creed of fatality. The relative importance given the column in Greek and Roman architecture was perfectly representative of the mortal struggle of lifting up against the horizontal dead weight of human destiny. In the Greek temple, the columns stand for this struggle upward, while the roof symbolizes

> The leveling weight
> Of mortal fate!

We may say that Gothic architecture was the instinctive uprising of the French and the German against the ancient and neo-ancient influences. In this uprising of the Gothic spirit were displayed the French love for lightness, airiness, delicacy, and the German love for somber depths and lofty solemn grandeurs—all reaching up through the zone of earth's fatality toward God and consequently hope. That Catholicism should have seized hold of the Gothic types in churches only illustrates its neo-ancient nature.

As for sculpture, we find its characteristic of bareness illustrated in the sea. The nakedness and the openness of the sea are reflected in statuary, and accentuate an opposition to the modern characteristic of clothedness, for which Nature furnishes an associate in the leafy, secluding forest. Hence arises that affinity between the sea and sculpture in their mutual suggestion

of lubricity. Their slippery smoothness has ever suggested the lubricous, for which term the forest presents no synonym. Venus was born not of a tree but of the lascivious wave whose tongue lapped the contours of her nude beauty. The powers of expression inherent in the sea and in sculpture lie only in the surface. The ocean's straight lines and curves, its emphasis on convexity and outline, all signalize it as the great Nature-symbol of the exterior and of the Greek genius for form—that which makes for the *visibly* effective.

In painting, the ancients seem to have heeded form rather than color. The function of perspective being to do that for design which chiaroscuro does for color—to modulate, to soften and to render agreeable—it appears that the ancients understood and employed perspective successfully, but not chiaroscuro. The latter is a modern means of expression in painting. It is obvious that, in Nature, chiaroscuro is best studied in the forest (where there is the play of varied light against dark backgrounds), and that the sea supplied the ancients with the most striking illustration of the laws of perspective.

In admitting that chiaroscuro may serve to distinguish painting from the other arts and is more expressive of, and the more closely associated with, the emotional and the moral than are design and form which are more mental, we are led to the fact that the greatest age in painting came after the era of the ancients, and produced eminently a moral—a Christian—art. Moral *motifs* are forest *motifs*, we shall note. In the glorified use of color by the Italian painters, we

may see Italy's revolt or deflection from what the world had hitherto accepted as the ancient influences, just as in Gothic architecture lay the northern reaction and self-assertiveness from the ancient dominion.

In modern, and hence in Christian, painting vertical rays prevail—rays rising Heavenward; and they are illustrated in Nature by the forest whose growth is upward. The ancient, or pagan, painting, we may safely say, was characterized, like the ancient architecture and its sea, by horizontal lines representative of the Greek and Roman fatalism and materialism. It seems, therefore, natural that Millet and Theo. Rousseau, born of Nature and of the Romantic school in France, had their homes here in the Fontainebleau woods and not by the sea. The forest, with its hopeful beams and streams of life against moral depths of shade, and with its delicate, chiaroscuro effects, its points and broken, difficult, fragments of color and form, made Fontainebleau, rather than the overpowering sea, a suitable abode and object of worship for the men of Barbizon. For these were precisely the first French painters of the earnest soul—the interior—of things as well as of surfaces.

Music, the distinctively modern art, has its Nature-source in the forest rather than in the sea, because, for one reason, the forest echoes—it enhances the value of sound both as to volume and sweetness. The sea represents echoless expanse, whereas the forest can transform the crudest clangor into celestial harmonies. A touch of the breeze on the leaf-limbed harpchords

of the woods produces delicious minors; while the dull moan, the fatalistic roar, of the sea suggest noise and power, not music. The triumph of the Romantic school in music had its direct Nature-source in the woods, whether we think of the forestal operas of the forest-haunting Weber, or of the Wagner music-dramas with their medieval themes and mid-European associations, or of the French Romantic operas where the cors de chasse resound and the mise-en-scène presents forests instead of the ocean. Silvan Germany has given the grandest music to the world.

What is true of the arts with respect to the sea and the forest may be expected to be likewise true of literature. But this branch of the subject would demand nothing less than a volume.

We may pass on to note how intimately the forest is allied to the modern religion of Protestantism and to the modern institution of the home. Protestantism, that sturdy moral revolution, came from wooded parts of Europe. The wood is the great Nature-source and emblem of all that is "agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." The forest's silence, depths and shade inspire the impulse for morality and love of religious liberty and of silent contemplation. Wherever Protestants held sway, there were forests, and the forests were preserved. Wherever Protestants were persecuted and forced to flee, their flight was followed by the devastation of the woods.

This was the case in France, and it was notably the case in Spain where the Inquisition, the severest of

Catholic persecutions, was accompanied by the widest destruction of forests by human hands that man has perhaps ever seen. The Spaniard's "hatred of a tree" is proverbial. The disposition of Catholicism, in the main, has been inimical to the forest and propitiatory to the sea. It is a fitting coincidence that Victor Hugo, the anti-Catholic leader of Romanticism in French literature, wished to be buried in some forest, while his Catholic mate and pendant Chateaubriand desired that his own remains repose near the sea. And, accordingly, the tomb of the immortal René was reared by the ocean at St. Malo.

A forest is Nature's expression of the idea of the home. The home signifies an interior, and the forest and a Gothic church emphasize the interior; while in the sea (as we have noted) and in the Greek temple, the exterior is the particular manifestation. The ocean suggests homelessness, and the ancients had no homes. The home came from the forest races. A forest means shelter, protection, and stands for the individual's right to quiet and seclusion.

Thus *shade*—an attribute which distinctly separates the forest from the sea—becomes a distinguishing characteristic between the art, religion and life of the ancients and of the moderns. An immense, fierce sunlight irradiates the sea-entwined lands of the ancient Hellenes and Romans, while shade and shadow gloom the countries of the North and their modern civilization. And together with the umbrageous and interior effects of the forest, which is, as we have seen,

"True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home,"

there is the inward quality of tenderness which we may oppose to the exterior effect of grace in the Greeks. How aptly does the familiar line

"Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,"

describe the Greek spirit!

Since the forest is so closely the prototype and associate of the Gothic church and of the home, it may be said to bear a like relation to the communal motive which has come down to us from the Middle Ages. Sabatier, in his life of St. Francis of Assisi, describes the Gothic cathedrals (and also forests, we may add in extension of the idea) as the representative triumph of communal institutions. He calls the Gothic churches "the lay churches of the thirteenth century built by the people and for the people: the true communal houses of our old cities—museums, granaries, chambers of commerce, palaces of justice, depots of archives, even bourses de travail."

In this wise might we very briefly indicate how the sea is the Nature-type for the ancient civilization, and how the forest is the Nature-type for the modern civilization—how the forest is Nature's sociological background of the distinctive deflections of modernity from antiquity: Gothic architecture in France, the religious cult of glorious, appealing color in Italy, and Protestantism and the home in Germany. While the trend of the ancient civilization was outward like the sea,

that of the modern (and Christian) world is dualistic, being upward like a tree and inward—interiorward—like a forest. The contrast of modern verticalness and ancient levelness is neatly set forth in the history of the evolution of oratory. In modern oratory, one of the most characteristic gestures is that of raising the hand high to Heaven. The classic Cicero, on the contrary, held that the gesture of an orator may extend wide as the arms can reach, yet it should never pass the summit of the head.

To pass from these more general considerations which Fontainebleau forest inspires, we may not less enjoy an intimate acquaintance with it as a symbol of what a tree and a large majestic wood signify.

If one studies the forest as a whole and for itself alone, he soon comes to regard it, not as a meaningless group of trees, but as an organic, sentient, intelligent body. The tree, for its part, breathes, absorbs, grows, reposes, dies, like man. It has youth, maturity and old age, and exhibits individual peculiarities of form and complexion. It develops an individualistic career, and is by nature aggressive or self-defending or both. It craves warmth. Its whole life, in imitation of man's, is a struggle upward for light. Trees requiring the most light content themselves with the poorest soil, and vice versa. How like a human being who, as he ascends more in the intellectual and moral scale and possesses more light and more enlightened content-

ment, cares less (at least we wish to think so) for the material things of earth!

The tree resembles the individual, the forest resembles the nation, and trees of the same kind, a race. Forests are republics—"those green republics," as Sully Prudhomme sings—whose whole is made up of a collection of individuals, whereas the ocean is typical of an empire wherein the sense of oneness overwhelms all else. There are race conflicts among trees as among men. We hear that a great war is going on at present between the broad-leaved trees on one side and the conifers on the other—those arboreal republicans and cossacks. And we are told that our broad-leaved friends are gradually winning the contest, and rightly too since they are of a higher order than the conifers.

A wood like a people perpetuates itself best by cross-breeding. A forest of one variety of tree is not so vigorous or long-lived as a multigenerous forest. It was long ago noticed here in the forest of Fontainebleau that oaks mingled in due proportion with beeches flourish robustly for five or six centuries, and that if unmixed with other trees, they begin to decay and die at the top after forty or fifty years. Thus a diversified society is as essential to the highest development of a forest as it is to that of a people. Cork oak forests thrive especially in, and are particularly characteristic of, France where the cork industry is perhaps as important as that of champagne. And the amiable humorist would be apt to remark: Like races, like forests—the French, resembling their cork forests, are precisely the lightest of races.

Forests were the home of our arboreal predecessors. They were also the friends of our historic ancestors. Wherever large forests have been felled, a permanent scourge has followed. The mistral was, it is said, the result of the devastation by the Romans of the wooded heights of the Cévennes. "The people thought this wind a curse sent of God. They raised altars to it and offered sacrifices to appease its rage." Revolutions in France have been accompanied usually, if not always, by lawless crusades against the woods. The peasants naturally associated forests with feudalism and royalty, because the forests, under the ancient régime, were mainly kept by the nobility for the chase, thus depriving the tillers of the soil of ground needed for agriculture.

It is claimed that the rise and fall of nations have been coincident with the conservation and destruction of forests. The quality of the brick of the Romans, we are often told, improved with the growth of Rome, was unexcelled during the era of her magnificent prosperity, and decayed with her decline. Forests were so rapidly destroyed during the period of her downfall that the cost of wood increased, and her brick, being as a result less thoroughly burned, became thicker and consequently poorer. The decadence of Spain has been freely ascribed to the felling of her forests, while the rise of England has been attributed to the wood-wealth of her colonies and the resultant supply of lumber for ship-building. The Iberian peninsula has a less wooded area proportionate to its size than any other European country save Denmark and Britain.

Turning from Catholic Spain we find, as might be expected, that Protestant Germany took the lead in the matter of conserving and caring for forests. The scientific world has now well established the fact that the forest is the material friend, and not the enemy, of man and of agriculture. Injurious insects do not breed in or near it. Worm-eating birds dwell along its borders. It combats miasms and malarias. It is a moderator of climatic extremes and of the furies of Nature. It equalizes temperature, humidity and drought. It makes the hot months more moist and cool, and the cold months more dry and mild. It warms and protects in winter; it shades and cools in summer.

The forest is naturally much closer than the sea to the types and forms of civilized institutions. Here on this majestic road through this great Fontainebleau wood in which there is, strange to say, neither water nor bird, we have, on our right, a pine forest of the north and, on our left, a beech forest of a more southern latitude. Two zones, two species, of civilization are thus pictured to us as we loiter along. Here toward the cold north is the red heather amid the sullen bowlders; and there toward the smiling south are the warm, soft, inviting lawns of beech-leaves. What delicious glimpses yonder up those paths that lead their greenways through the solitudes of beech and pine! How loyal to one's soul those rows of trees bristling the edge of that blue oriflamme of distant hills and standing dimly athwart the misty air as if sentineling the frontier of the Other-World!

Silviculturists detail at length the intellectual inter-

est that the woods present. Naturalists tell us that forest animals are more social, sympathetic and quicker-witted than surface animals. The forest sharpens the faculties of observation and clears up the brain. It is a specific cerebral tonic. We have already referred to its ethical and spiritual influence. In representing the interior and the upward it represents *character,* while the sea symbolizes the charm and polish of grace—of the exterior in life. The forest inspires trust, a comforting snugness of existence, while the sea deadens our finer instincts, sensibilities and hopes by its inexorable openness and unpitying brutality. It seems to picture to us the impotency of man, the hopelessness of eternity, the cruelty of the infinite. It teaches fear, and the forest, faith. The wood-chopper has confidence at the bottom of his heart, and the fisherman, terror.

The sea is pagan; the forest is Christian. The sea suggests waste, destruction, death. Unlike the forest, it does not stand for growth. From the beginning of time, it has terrified the torchbearers of civilization and has angrily blocked the spread of progress. It destroys history and the past. The ocean and its ally sand are persistent enemies of man. Human works are washed away by the sea and are conserved by the forest. The forest preserves tradition and fact. It is the friend of the past and of the future; and within its bosom may be felt,

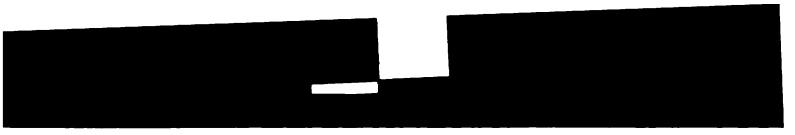
"The life where hope and memory are as one."

In view of the forest's wholesome and effective rôle, we see why the nemophilis may urge that the for-

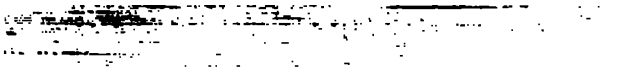
est is more truly a desirable rest resort for Christian man than is the seashore. To the grandeur and fierceness of the sea, the forest opposes sweetness, tenderness. In the woods one escapes the glare of the burning sun, the relentless winds, the driving rains and storms—all the powerful, sudden, harmful, extreme manifestations of Nature which sweep the sea coast. It is the barbarousness in us that the ocean arouses with its spectacular ominousness; while the woods appeal to our higher, more refined selves. We recall Ruskin's remark: "As I have grown older, the aspects of Nature conducive to human life have become hourly more dear to me; and I had rather now see a brown harvest field than the brightest Aurora Borealis."

The seaside is, in our day, more popular in summer than the forest. Likely the reason for this is that wealth and fashion can better display their show by the ocean where Nature flaunts her wildest schemes of gigantic, massed colors. The forest subdues the sensational, and has no society columns. Perhaps most modern people, like Madame Bovary, love the sea for its tempests—for its colossal arena that sets off the ceaseless contrasts and terrific violences of Pan. One notes how naturally Ruskin turns to the sea for his figure of speech when he exclaims that those who love variety and change are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted: that the hardest-hearted "hold by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up noise and dirt."

Are there not those who would say that there is, sociologically, too much of the sea and too little of the forest in our modern civilization?



v. Hedda Gabler and the Parisians



HEDDA GABLER AND THE PARISIANS

"HEDDA GABLER" has taken its place as one of the most significant and influential plays of modern times. Even by those who do not njoy it, the importance of its originality, not to speak f its prominence, is perforce admitted. The reactions t excited in the French, who stood forth so alien to its ilieu and its type, were an interesting test and a salient sult which vividly bring out Parisian tastes and stand-ds of social life.

A study of their view of it when first produced in ance seems, therefore, well worth while. The con-sts are lucid and striking and set forth in relief ench character and disposition as expressed in con-ction with the dramatic art.

Why did not the French understand "Hedda bler"? Of all Ibsen's plays, it is perhaps the least rwegian, being apparently in accord with French as in the following respects:

It has no problem or thesis. Its moral is not brought o bold relief. It is not surcharged with the enig-atic, fatalistic, terrible weirdness of "The Wild uck," nor has it the vague, evanescent romance of The Lady from the Sea." "Hedda Gabler" is bur-ned with no monologues, no long tirades. The dia-gue throughout is natural, ingenious, nervous and

well sustained. This is especially to the French taste. With them conversation is usually the life of the play, and it must be bright and entertaining. What the characters say should be simply the result of the dialogical encounter, and not of premeditation—or, in other words, no forced replies. The conversations in "Hedda Gabler" are of this nature. Since the piece has no great, broad strokes, no excesses of coloration, no oppressive weight of despondency, the mind of the spectator is not distracted for a moment from the dialogue. The characters find, French-like, their best, their complete, expression in their interrelations. No bewildering perspectives are disclosed in the progress of the plot, and the characters are developed in the familiar light of every-day existence. The play is simple in its conception, structure and action, and Ibsen has observed in it the laws of order, discretion and delicacy—the "medium qualities" which the Parisians prefer.

Thus it would appear at first that the answer to our question—Why did not the French understand "Hedda Gabler"?—must be found in the profound contrasts between the French and the Norwegian environments. Since a play is apt to be the typical product of a climate and natural scenery, and of a people and its religious, political and social conditions, the Scandinavian drama is properly individualistic. The Norwegian, under his lowering clouds, among his wild ridges, along his jagged, abysmal fiords and by his sullen seas, ever verges toward the brink of the tragic. By contrast, gregariousness is one of the chief characteristics of the

French. The city is their ideal and "one must do like the others" is their guiding rule of action. They are relatively free from egoism and personal ambition. Their vanity is displayed in their admiration of Paris and of France—in a word, of their race. The Scandinavian is radical and intense as an individual, and, driven by his imagination, he always tries to go to the very end. The French are radical and extreme as a nation rather than as individuals. Impersonality thus characterizes their drama: the ensemble is the mark of their plays.

Silence is as necessary to the Scandinavian as conversation is to the Parisian. While the former talks in dumb terms and broken sentences, the latter is at his best when he converses. At the same time the Frenchman learns especially by sight. He must *see*, literally, in order to comprehend well. As the eye requires form, proportion and precision for its visual pabulum, the result is that these qualities are essential to his drama. But in the dark domains of the North the eye is of less artistic importance, and the plays of the dreaming Norwegian are comparatively vague and amorphous. With him, likewise, there is no marvel without a veil. With the Parisian, nothing that is veiled is marvelous.

Now, where do these Scandinavian traits develop in "Hedda Gabler"? Notably in the three prominent characters. The three persons whom the Parisians did not understand are Hedda, Loevborg and Madam Elvsted. In what ways were they enigmas? Let us take Sarcey as an influential representative of the tra-

ditional French ideas of the drama and discuss briefly his questions and criticisms. He used to confess in "Le Temps," with some satisfaction, his inability to discover much except downright stupidity in these rôles. He described Hedda as, at least in Act I, a Norwegian Madame Bovary. She has married a young savant who is not blessed with riches, and who adores her sillily without knowing the rebellions and rancors which agitate her. Sarcey insisted that Flaubert handled the plot with much more fidelity to nature than Ibsen. That was true for Sarcey, but not for the Scandinavian; and it is difficult for the unvoyaged Frenchmen to believe, not to say realize, that types of character not found in France may be found elsewhere. Hedda has flirted in the past with a Bohemian of genius, Loevborg; and in repelling his advances on one occasion, she leveled a pistol at him. He resorted to drink, and she married Tesman. She gave up Loevborg as hopelessly debauched, and he passed from her mind.

However, Loevborg becomes acquainted with the young and childless Madam Elvsted who, in her devotion to him, reforms him. He is the instructor of her husband's children. She aids Loevborg in his literary work, and is deeply interested in the book which he is writing. His head is somewhat turned by its great success and he suddenly disappears from the Elvsted mansion. Madam Elvsted, who has no affection for her elderly, unloving husband, goes in search of Loevborg, fearing that he may fall into his old habits. She calls on Hedda whom she had known. Hedda, hearing of Loevborg's reformation and Madam Elvsted's

literary collaboration with him, is seized, as Sarcey said, with "infernal thoughts." He could not imagine what their source is, nor why, henceforth, she acts so distractedly. He complained that she nowhere clears the mystery, and that her words and actions are extremely incoherent.

To an Anglo-American, however, this character presents little difficulty, for he has known Hedda Gablers, or can easily imagine them. Having lost her mother at an early age, Hedda has been carelessly reared by her father, General Gabler. We picture her as a pale, thin-haired person with martial-like shoulder knots, and a suggestion of the Bernhardt cincture. She has cold, steel-gray, challenging eyes. She is a high-strung, dramatic young woman, with a false or unfortunate theory of life. Mediocre, but egotistic and ambitious, she has, what the French call, a desire to "knock about." Wishing no domestic nor maternal duties, she married the fumbling Tesman because he, of her many cavaliers, was the only one who offered her any kind of a future. After all her fond dreams, she finds herself entering upon a long, dull married existence with a boyish man, a bookworm, who, while he has promise, develops no traits that correspond with her theatrical ideas. She does not love him, nor can she love any one. Ambition takes the place of affection in her nature. She failed to save Loevborg because she did not love him.

Madam Elvsted's call is, therefore, an awful revelation to the high-metaled Hedda. All in a moment she understands that she is of no vital importance to any

person—that she has no rôle in the world. She realizes that she is no part of her husband's career; that it can never bring her into the sort of relief which she craves; that she has had no real influence even over Loevborg, the man who loved her passionately and who was best suited to her ambitions. She sees that she is destined to be a doll—a domestic nonentity. Hence her despair and the source of her "infernal thoughts"; and she simply gives vent to her genuine feelings when she exclaims in her dramatic way: "I long to have power for once in my life over a human destiny!"

I was reading Hedda Gabler one morning to a French friend, a professor in one of the Paris lycées. He found it delightful until I reached the above sentence, and I could not induce him to listen to another word of the play. "Why," he said, "a character in a drama must love somebody, or be moved by a distinct motive or some concrete passion, and not by vague ideas and abstractions. Instead of exclaiming 'I love Loevborg!' she cries out, 'I want to be of importance to some one—any one.' Hedda is cracked, and you can never make a true drama with a crazy person or a fool for the principal character. The play is absurd."

The foregoing is a fair statement of what appeared to be Sarcey's ideas of the conception and characters of the drama in general and of Hedda Gabler in particular. But to us, Hedda is neither insane nor a fool; she is simply terribly mistaken. From her standpoint, she thinks and acts logically, she measures her surroundings, she plans with complete self-possession, and she perceives clearly the end toward which she

is precipitating herself. Yet, mortal-like, she fails to understand that the fault is in herself and not in those about her. Her environment is as she has organized it. Her ennui and unhappiness come from her own colorless, cold nature. Brack, the social villain in the play, strikes the head of the difficulty when he says to her: "I think the trouble is that you have never known anything really stimulating."

The Parisians looked at Hedda only from their point of view, and not without reason for she is largely a French character. She is feverish, dramatic. She is, individually considered, just the type of sensational heroine so often staged in France. But the Parisians could not imagine why she should take such a tragic, diabolical course. Married, she is free to exploit her ambitions; and if Loevborg is unavailable, why, they asked, does she not find another gallant, since it is admitted that she only wishes comradeship? The explication of it is that this is hardly possible in monogamous Scandinavia. They ignored her environment, and hence, whenever it influences her, she seems to them absurd or crack-brained. They could not well believe, judging from her temperament and misdeeds, that she is virtuous. They could not easily see why Hedda, to whom the all-night's festivities of her husband, Loevborg and Brack were quite the reverse of shocking, should live in such fear of scandal. They did not realize that scandal in a Norwegian town is different from scandal in Paris.

In other words, remembering that this drama shows, as Ibsen himself explains, the result of the contact of

two social environments which cannot comprehend each other—Hedda as opposed to good old Aunt Juliana—we may affirm that its first performance in the French capital illustrated, as well, how the Parisian milieu, represented by Hedda the individual, did not comprehend the Scandinavian milieu, represented by her domestic, untheatrical surroundings.

Loevborg, also, was without signification to the French. They could not appreciate the ado made over his indulging in a glass of liquor, nor conceive why he should kill himself because of a single carousal. There are rarely drunkards, as we understand the term, among the better French classes. Consequently the Parisians are never solicitous about any one's drinking habits. As for an occasional gay night, that does not appear a sufficient cause to them for the fatal or moral despair of a young man. Thus the character of Loevborg, to us so natural and tragic, was ridiculous to them.

The last of these Ibsen "fools" was the gentle, sympathetic Madam Elvsted, whom it is unnecessary, for the present purpose, to discuss. Yet, what is more familiar to Americans than the rôle of a married woman who undertakes to reform a young man? French people are not apt to concern themselves in a missionary way about the private life of others. Madam Elvsted's course could only be explained by them on the ground that she is simply a little goose.

When Hedda burns the book because it is the infant of Loevborg and Madam Elvsted; when, in giving him the fatal pistol, she bids him end his life *gracefully*;

when, after learning that the ball entered the *stomach* instead of the temple or breast, she exclaims: "It is finished! Oh, what a curse of ridicule and vulgarity attaches to everything that I merely touch!"—the French remarked that such performances are only the freaks of idiots or the nonsense of simpletons.

The difference in environment affects more or less, also, the art in this play. For instance, its dialogue apparently possesses, as we have noticed, the qualifications which the French consider necessary for successful stage conversation, yet its art naturally escaped them. This was due, among other things, to its low relief, of which the following example is taken from a conversation between Hedda and the cicisbeo Brack—just the scene one would expect the French to enjoy.

BRACK

All that I ask for is a pleasant little circle of associates whom I can serve by word and deed, and among whom I can be allowed to come and go—as a tried friend——

HEDDA

Of the husband, do you mean?

BRACK

(*Bows.*) Well, above all, of the wife. And of the husband too, of course that's understood. Don't you know that an arrangement of this kind, which one might call *triangular*, is really very agreeable to all three?

HEDDA

Yes, more than once on our trip I realized the
of a third person. Ugh! Those tête-à-tête in
coupé.

BRACK

Happily, the wedding journey is over now.

HEDDA

(*Shakes her head.*) The journey will be a long
—a very long one. I have only reached the first
tion.

BRACK

Well, one jumps out then and moves about a li
you know.

HEDDA

I never get out.

BRACK

Really—never?

HEDDA

No, for there is always some one who——

BRACK

(*Laughing.*) Who looks at one's ankles, you me

HEDDA

Precisely.

BRACK

Well, but, dear me——

HEDDA

(*With a forbidding gesture.*) I don't like that.
prefer to remain tête-à-tête.

BRACK

But if a third person gets into the coupé?

HEDDA

Ah, that would be different.

BRACK

A tried, sympathetic friend——

HEDDA

—Entertaining one with all sorts of lively subjects——

BRACK

—And not at all a *specialist!*

HEDDA

(*Audibly drawing in her breath.*) Ah, that would be a great relief.

BRACK

(*Looking around as he hears the outer door open.*) The *triangle* is closing up.

HEDDA

(*Whispers.*) And the train is starting again.

TESMAN, *the husband, enters.*

This passage was lost to a Parisian audience. Here are two metaphors, Hedda's continued double entendre and Brack's indirect persistence—a tragedy under the guise of badinage—all carried along together some time without any éclats! This complicated grouping of ideas and figures of speech in an inconspicuous way

without a sally or a scintillation, is not the French manner of dealing with stage dialogue.

And, then, the ordonnance of the play is arranged by endowing Hedda with no heroic traits. If she be not a fool or an insane person we must admit, the French have argued, that she is in no sense worthy of the first rôle. She not only does not attract us: she hardly even wins our sympathy in her distress. Above all she is demoralizing. Hence they wondered why the English, who are always seeking the moral everywhere, should have taken early notice of this drama.

Loevborg, not Hedda, the Parisians told us, is the true center of the plot. He has genius, fire, nobility. He possesses truly a heroic quality. But here a figurante is the heroine, they have maintained, and in effacing the hero in order to give prominence to her, Ibsen created a deformed play. How far this is from satisfying the French demand for unity, symmetry, ordonnance and form everywhere in the drama!

vi. The Production of Noted Persons in France

THE PRODUCTION OF NOTED PERSONS IN FRANCE

A LIST which I have gleaned of noteworthy persons born in France in the nineteenth century yields a total of 1424, of whom 32 are women. Artists have not been included. The table is made up very largely of names known to literature, science, jurisprudence, politics, theology. It is merely hoped here to give in a general way, so far as this schedule goes, some notion as to the comparative merits of Paris and the different provinces and grand divisions of France in the matter of productions of persons of note.

Two tests—that of area and that of population—may be applied.

But first of all we may observe, in a parenthetical paragraph, that the national capital contributed 335 of our noted persons, or about 23%, at a time when Paris represented only about 4% of the population of France. This showing quite justifies, in its way, the French glorification of the metropolis on the Seine. Strikingly superior appear to be the chances of distinction for a Frenchman who is born in Paris instead of in province.

Now applying, first, the test of area to the grand divisions of France, we notice that the grand division most fertile in noteworthy people in proportion to its

area is the North where there was produced one noted person for every 90 square miles. Next comes the Northeast, presenting one for every 130 square miles. Then the East; next the Northwest. The Center, the South and, poorest of all, the West make the least creditable showings. Accordingly the parts of France richest in noted people lie along, or adjacent to, the most densely settled of the bordering foreign regions.

If we divide France into east and west halves along the meridian of Paris we find nearly three persons of note born in the east half to two in the west half. If we cut France into north and south halves along a line drawn a little to the south of Bourges we have, excluding Paris, four persons of note born in the north half to three in the south half.

Remarking next the merits of the French provinces with respect to their production of noted people as compared with their areas, we observe that, in the leading group, Ile de France, Lyonnais, Flanders and then Artois lead in this order. The city of Lyons brings up Lyonnais. (For lucidity we are using the old-time historic nomenclature of the provinces.) The marked inferiority of Picardy to her surrounding sisters should be remarked and appears by no means sufficiently explained by the fact that her capital, Amiens, was comparatively small. Provence is quite ahead of Languedoc, Normandy of course outranks Brittany, and Burgundy leads Champagne. The provinces that have a good showing while containing not one of the leading cities of France are notably Artois, followed by Angoumois.

shunning Breton; and also in the province of the slow, scrutinous Norman where the climate is moderate, the features of the earth's surface are effaced into a comparative commonplaceness, and the streams have a thick, flat flow. And it is, indeed, a neat coincidence that the French race, which is distinguished by its genius for symmetry and ordonnance and for a pronounced sense of precise form, should dwell in a land possessing such a graceful equilibrium and compact elegance of general outline.

If we submit the French provinces to the test of population (always excluding Paris when we speak of Ile de France), we see Ile de France leading, then Provence, Touraine and Burgundy in this order. Touraine, which has played a modest rôle in our other lists, is well to the fore here, with Picardy always lingering in the rear. Flanders and Normandy appear far from the top. Provence, which is decidedly in advance of Languedoc, still holds rank among the leading provinces. Champagne presents her usual weak record. As in the test by area, the provinces cutting the poorest figure here lie for the most part in the center and west.

Measuring these results with those corresponding under the area test, one sees Ile de France at the head of both lists. But I discover that Alsace was a precious bit of territory to France in the way of bearing men of note. That Lorraine did not match her appears explained by the fact that the eastern-southeastern slope of the Vosges is much milder and more fertile than the northwestern.

If Normandy holds a somewhat disappointing posi-

its Champagne "pouilleuse," the region lying toward Italy and forming the great northwestern exit-area of the Roman civilization.

The north half of France, with its cereals and rich diversity of products, outranks the south half with its wealth of vineyards. The Alsatians, the Lorraines, the Franks, lead the Normans, the Celts, the Méridionaux. Brachycephaly triumphs here over dolichocephaly, and the Teutonic over the "Latin." The continental east half of France, where the summers are the hottest and the winters are coldest, is both actually and relatively more prolific in noted persons than the maritime west half where the Gulf Stream diffuses a warm and moist equableness. The extremes of heat and cold are most marked in the Northeast, which rivals even the Ile de France in bearing noteworthy sons. The inhabitants of the Northeast are described as "prompt to anger and to enterprise." The Southeast is famous for its violent caprices of atmosphere and its impetuous torrents, whence the passionate temperament of its people and their "brusque returns to indolence and languor." This invites the assumption that the Northeast, the Southeast and the Biscayan land, with its Gascons, contribute the element of nervous energy and lightly explosive irritableness to French life, character and history.

The counteracting element of conservativeness, which is, in some phases, sheer backwardness and, in others, clever thrift and admirable prudence, must be looked for in the central plateau (the "negative pole" of France); and in the land of the dreamy, progres-

shunning Breton; and also in the province of the slow, scrutinous Norman where the climate is moderate, the features of the earth's surface are effaced into a comparative commonplaceness, and the streams have a thick, flat flow. And it is, indeed, a neat coincidence that the French race, which is distinguished by its genius for symmetry and ordonnance and for a pronounced sense of precise form, should dwell in a land possessing such a graceful equilibrium and compact elegance of general outline.

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If Normandy holds a somewhat disappointing posi-

tion, being excelled by seven provinces in the test of area and by sixteen in the test of population, what shall be said of Picardy's very low rank? For we read of the Picardians: "A powerful race, quick of thought and yet tenacious and persevering, they unite the qualities of the Méridionaux with those of the people of the north." Languedoc, whose "towns do not wish to be ports," stands as the average between the highest and lowest, being easily outmatched by her maritime sister, Provence. Burgundy, with her wines which have such a mysteriously strong effect on the brain, leads the region of the Bordeaux wines; and Normandy, with her cider, yields precedence to both. The sparkle and exhilaration of champange do not save its "barren" home—Champagne—from comparative insignificance; and we also find Poitou, famous for its jackasses, and the Amorican peninsula well toward the foot of the row.

I learn from our compilations that the population shifted very perceptibly from country to city. And, indeed, it is confidently said that in a reasonably near future the most of the inhabitants of France will be urban—that the peasant will give way before the artisan, the workman and the commercial folk. One hundred and twenty-five years ago the French population was eminently rural or agricultural: the peasant was "maître de France." It has been shown that toward 1830 only about one-fourth of the inhabitants of France dwelt in cities or towns having over 2,000 souls. Nevertheless, it is safe to estimate that this one-fourth—namely, the urban population—contribu-

ted about 50 per cent of the noted persons of France, since Paris alone furnished 25 per cent. In other words, a French person stood in the nineteenth century a much better chance of becoming noteworthy if born in a city or town than if born in the country or in a village.

Now we may take our 1424 noteworthy people we started out with and arrange them according to their callings.

About one-fourth of the 97 poets whom we find among our list hail from Paris. After Paris, the southern provinces appear to be richest in versifiers.

Of the 78 writers of fiction, Paris claims about one-third. Ile de France and Languedoc come next with seven each, and then Brittany with five.

Of the 57 playwrights, Paris furnishes three-fifths, the rest being thoroughly scattered.

Of the 479 "littérateurs," Paris has nearly one-fourth, and Normandy and Guienne excel the other provinces.

Of the 174 journalists, Paris has about two-ninths, and Guienne and Normandy head the provinces.

Of the 70 historians, Paris has yielded about one-third.

Of the 28 savants, Paris has 4, being behind Brittany with 5.

Of the 58 jurisprudents, Paris gives about one-sixth and is closely pushed by her own province, Ile de France.

Of the 68 politicists, Paris has about two-sevenths and Brittany comes first among the provinces.

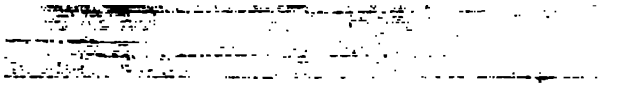
Of the 265 scientists, Paris furnishes about 30 per cent while Guienne and Normandy are at the top of the list of the country commonwealths.

Of the 50 theologians, Paris is credited with one-tenth, being equaled by Guienne and by Languedoc.

Guienne, Languedoc and Provence—the three southern sisters—outrival any other three provinces in poetry and hold their own as to "littérateurs" and scientists, while they are overmatched by the North in history and are absolutely devoid of savants. Normandy, in this table, does not seem to justify her reputation for litigiousness, for she does not lead her sisters in jurisprudents.

And we may close our list of comparisons by yoking Brittany and Guienne together and finding the former in advance in savants and writers of fiction, while dragging wofully behind in "littérateurs," journalists and scientists.

vii. The Gray and Gay Race



THE GRAY AND GAY RACE

THE French are a gray people who live in a gray metropolis and in a gray country. Paris lies in a limestone region and is built of gray one. A large part of the city is undermined by cient quarries. Its roofs, pavements, trottoirs and idges are gray. The absence of smoke and dirt per-ts time to deepen leisurely the color of the stone and transform the city into a mosaic of gray. Old ades are being replaced constantly by new hues nich, in their turn, ripen with age. The interior ef-ct of Notre Dame with its great ashen-colored win-ows, and of the Invalides where Napoleon lies, is aracteristically gray.

The tints of the Seine vary from a grayish green to deep steel gray. French soils and notably French ies are griseous. All about one in France is "this r that is never blue," as Gautier described it. French wns and villages are grizzled. Their buildings are ther of gray stone or are plastered over, and their ofs are usually a faded brown. This color of town d village seems to change as soon as the Belgian ontier is crossed. French verdure and landscapes ssess a reseda, and the French cemeteries are wholly ay.

Gray Paris and gray northern France are as con-

colorous as Nature can well permit in a fertile and temperate latitude. Thus the fact may be accounted for that, as a rule, the eyes of Parisians and their garments are gray or grayish. The general appearance of French peasants is griseous. And there are proportionally more gray horses in northern France than in other countries. It is the home of the gray Norman thoroughbred.

This grayness of the French suggests two traits or qualities of the race:

First—Gray is the color of moderation. And are not the French the most prudent and moderate of all the great modern peoples? A Parisian is conservative to a fault. He does not overwork or overplay. He is not apt to fail to do to-day what to-morrow he will feel most contented to have done. Easily satisfied, he needs little to amuse him. The Parisians are, as Renan says of the Greeks, cheerfully philosophical and sober in their pleasures. In testimony of this, the careful observer will remark that their faces seem creditably free from indications of excessive indulgence.

Second—Gray, the color of brain matter, is the color of mentality. That the gray Parisian is preëminently sane would thus appear inevitable; hence his moderateness. He worships le bon sens—the head. Acquiring and enjoying largely through the medium of the brain, he leads an active mental life. French art and literature are, above all things, rational. What a Frenchman seizes in a song or a picture is especially the meaning of the words, the subject, the idea—the sense be-

fore the passion or illusion. French music in the main produces a kind of cerebral pleasure. It is occasionally exquisite and nearly always refined and chaste. Even the Parisian ballet music, a realm where one would expect to find reveling that astonishing licentiousness which Teutonic races impute to the French, is almost purely mental in its charm and signally free from sensual taint.

Before the Romantic epoch in France the complexion of French literature was gray, as Gautier remarked; and he wielded a vigorous hand in changing this dominant hue into red at the battle of Hernani. But in our day the sanglant scarlets of the Romantic triumph—colorations so especially reflected across the prisms of the glorious Hugo and de Lisle—are neutralizing and masking themselves gradually into maturer tints, and compromising on the national griseous.

The favorite color in the French schools of painting is gray or, to speak paradoxically, the absence of color. Gray was its general tone before the time of the Romanticists who introduced, in Paris, variety of hue as appropriate of emotion. Yet the grandiose Romantic school was not born of France. While it is true that gray cannot always be said to prevail at the Champs-Elysées or in any of the Independent salons, still the color of French canvases, as the violent Romantic influence fades away, will become more and more mentalized and subdued and be characterized by a grayish disposition.

For, to the French, gray is the hue of truth, ideality

and of life itself. Their devotion to form and ordonnance before color and romantic effects is a gray, and hence a mental, trait.

Inquiring into the original significance of the word gray, we find that it comes mainly from expressions meaning old—"that which has white hair"—and that it generally designates old age. And, indeed, the gray French are not to be distinguished as a race of young people. There is in France relatively little youth that is young in years. French lads work hard and steadily. As a result they have their baccalaureate at the Sorbonne at eighteen or nineteen, and it corresponds to the degree which the average English and American collegiate earns at twenty-one. French boys do not possess that wealth of juvenile literature, sport and liberty which makes youth in the United States so long and pleasant. They have comparatively little time in which to be really young.

On the other hand, elderly Frenchmen, though they rarely regret their boyhood and seldom refer to it with pleasure, are inclined to wear youthful cuts of clothes and gay cravats and to insist on loving the world. How true were Flaubert's words when he described the men at the marquis's ball which Madame Bovary attended! "Those who were beginning to grow old had a juvenile air, while something of maturity was seen on the faces of the younger men." Mature and aged Parisian ladies are famous for their gay hats, lively ribbons and daring toilets, yet their maiden daughters are garbed in sober stuffs. French girls are driven by urgent tasks and have little company save

that of their elders. They learn what they know of youth after marriage. Michelet expressed it aptly when he said: "One is not born young in France but one becomes young."

The idea of the inexistence of young youth in the land of the Seine was first distinctly suggested to me by the eighteenth century portraits of young persons in the Louvre. Gray is the predominant color in these paintings. Maidens are almost invariably represented in griseous costumes with whitish head-dresses and as having gray flesh. The most noted among these canvases are Greuze's pictures of girls with their grayish garments and complexions and their dull, faded blond hair. I have seen their types among the French middle classes.

Gray seems to have become the characteristic color of the French costume and coiffure about the commencement of the eighteenth century. It was then that the word grisette tripped into the French language. Of significant importance in that epoch was the fashion of powdering the hair so that it had a gray appearance. The radical sense of grizzled (*gris*led) is dusted or powdered over, and this meaning would properly come from gray which indicated those who have white hair.

The gray mode of coiffure was partly the result of the fact that Louis XIV, in his last years, was persuaded to wear powdered peruques by the argument that "the use of powder equalizes all ages and softens the expression of the face." A courtier of the time said: "Everybody nowadays wants to be old in order

to be sage." In 1788 a French authority, referring to the universal use of powdered coiffures, wrote: "Powdered hair, while being convenient, is essential to decorum and has been regarded by civilized peoples as of the first necessity." This gray fashion for the young and the aged prevailed in France throughout the eighteenth century. Youth was rendered old—a French trait still to-day.

And this leads affirmatively to the question, Are not the gray French in reality the only senescent modern people of importance? Their unique mental life—mental because it does not lose itself in the heart-expanding and soul-stirring enthusiasms and illusions of young youth, since there is little of that in France—associates itself naturally with senescence. English observers, in attesting the old-headedness of their practical neighbors across the Channel, appear to prove that the dominating ambition of a Frenchman is to possess a competency. He has a horror of having nothing but prospects—of trusting to the Future and Providence. French love affairs and marriages, as every one knows, are prudently controlled by money considerations. These customs, as well as most if not all French customs, are typical of old age; and consequently, to the student of the quaintly pat and fitting, would it not seem proper that French bank notes should have a grayish cast?

Another evidence of the senescence (thus rationally displayed) of the French is the fact that they are not only smaller in stature than any of their leading rivals but are the only great people threatened by a

decreasing population. The causes of the depopulation of France are apparently radical and irremediable because they arise from senescence.

In this wise, it might appear to the pessimist that the French have passed their maturity and are in decay. If we are to assume that the salient apex of their civilization was the age of Louis XIV, the decline clearly commenced in the eighteenth century—the time when gray (the mark of the old) began to be the characteristic color of the French people. Rousseau's cult of the "vert" (green), the French Revolution, the genius of the exotic Napoleon, and the imported Romantic school with its red corpuscles, infused new life and arrested the decay of France. But once more, the pessimist may argue, it is face to face with its natural and courted destiny—extinction. This destiny may be deferred in the future as in the past by unforeseen agencies and events. In any case the decline of the French will be very gentle and slow, and their fate will in no wise hinder their brilliant, glorious light from shining on and on like that of the Greeks.

It is natural for an Anglo-American to ask, Why then are the old and gray French precisely the gayest of peoples?—for gray does not suggest gayety to us. Etymology seems to answer the question. Wedgwood treats gay and gray about as follows:—

Originally gay and gray probably came from words signifying parti-colored—from words meaning speckled and mottled. Perhaps the true origin may be found in the analogy by which expressions of conceptions dependent on the faculty of hearing are extended

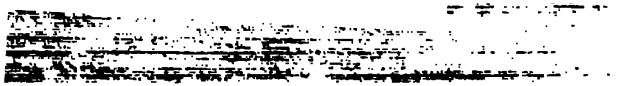
to those of a similar character dependent on sight. Thus broken, conspicuous color would naturally be taken from a broken, chattering, gay sound. The word signifying liveliness of color appears to have been transferred to the expression of liveliness of disposition.—

Was it quite by accident that the gay French shop-girl and sewing girl wore gray dresses and were called grisettes—the word for gray being gris? And is not to be discovered here the correct explanation of the French verb se griser, to get tipsy? It is reasonable to suppose that this expression was introduced to hit off the nervous, noisy state of a tipsy Frenchman, and that it has veritably no connection with the German benebeln which typically describes the placidly beclouded condition of an inebriated Teuton?

Therefore, for the very reason that a race is gray, it should be gay—gayness being grayness and grayety being gayety. The French are uniquely represented by these two traits. Béranger understood this as if by instinct when he wrote the well-known song, "The Gay Little Gray Man of Paris." Our Anglo-Saxon race associates gray with somberness, lack-luster infestivity and the gloom of advanced years. We have lost its gay signification and the French have kept it. With them gray old age does not make itself felt as forlorn or sad. On the contrary, it assumes a wonderful sprightliness. The grandparents are apt to be the most vivacious members of Parisian families. Vivacity is the French interpretation of second childhood. They believe that gayety is the natural, happy lot of all old

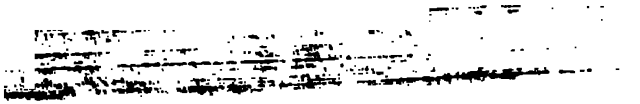
people who have lived temperately and well. They are far from sharing those Puritan penances which resign the last years of life to the mournful shadows of the tomb.

And it may seem suggestive thus to note how etymology, with its roots deep in the hoary past, appears to nod its venerable branches in approval of the cheerful and profound lesson which the gray French teach the world, namely this: Gayety is the proper attribute of old age as well as of practical, moderate and mental living.



PROFILES

i. Jules Claretie



PROFILES

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JULES CLARETIE was born at Limoges in 1840 and died in 1913. He was one of the most popular Frenchmen of his time. He became an ardent Republican, unlike many other French writers who dated from the Second Empire. He was an agreeable talker and indefatigably industrious. He held the position of Administrateur-Général of the Théâtre Français from 1885.

JULES CLARETIE

JULES CLARETIE was often to be seen walking rapidly up the Avenue de l'Opéra, with his kindly, open, humanitarian, bearded countenance a little upturned, typical of his frank, glad-handed, aspiring nature. One observed a figure in the usual Frenchman's modest, carelessly fitting habit, the ends of the overcoat sagging down, and the inevitable umbrella and neckcloth. A medium sized man, with a slight literary stoop.

To wait for a word with him in the green room of the Français or on its private staircase where one quails under the battery of shining, challenging glances from those fine-spun, high-wrought actresses lying in wait to waylay the Administrator for a better rôle, was to tarry for a man ever ready and apparently anxious to see you. But with no time. "Won't you kindly write and tell me what I can do for you?" Thus would come at length his friendly response and request.

In that dramatic household you realized somewhat the daily hardships he underwent with so much benevolence during those twenty-eight years of service at the hardest post of its kind in the world. What a marvel to maneuver that highly spiced company of esthetes and exquisites—players and coquettes—charming, spoiled

children of genius and talent—perfumed with vanity, keyed-up in delicately strained tensions, intertwined in fine nets of intrigue, and living in daily intimacy on one another's nerves!

Quite representative of the best moral elements of France Claretie proved, however, a master in managing that befluttered dovecote of petticoats. And it was the Comédie too in one of its most valued and varied epochs. He wrote, it is true, with Henry Cain "la Navarraise" for Massenet. But there was in his make-up neither *lyrisme* nor much of that clinging, feverish color of sexual grace which appeals in a great deal of Massenet's music.

When traveling, Claretie remained thoroughly French—a racial trait in French tourists. His excursions into Germany did not prevent this gracious man from maintaining a distinctly anti-German attitude in his history called "La guerre nationale." In his novel "l'Américaine" (1892), one fails to find anything truly American but its subject—divorce. And that was its real topic and excuse. For the Parisians at first chided us and then at length blessed us for that important custom extended into latter-day France.

Notwithstanding Claretie's twenty novels, his histories, his uncounted volumes of critical comment and appreciation on Paris life, art and everything else, an evolutionary Brunetière would say it was natural that Claretie's best creation should be Brichanteau, Comedian. It is apparently the only permanent and living thing that emerges from his cloud of writings.

Brichanteau, the gay, facile actor with a heart, is

rhaps Claretie himself in the form of a player. ted by the unduplicated De Féraudy, then flattened t to fit the comédie de salon and "easy to play" class, ichanteau, matured actor of a little theater, suc- :ding in his own failure, spirituel, diverting, rolling ı r's like a performer of the banlieu—Brichanteau es while Claretie dies.

To compare this figure with its famous prototype in ıudet's Delobelle, born some twenty-two years be- re, is to see the one as on the stage itself and the ıer as in the pages of a real living novel. Likely :lobelle will always be the greater. For Claretie, ıt of all and by profession a journalist, was, one may ſ, ever a journalist. He exemplified the touch-and-go fuseness and impermanency of the daily newspaper. ıudet was pure literature, looking up toward the ɔreme and the enduring, and finishing everything wn to the smallest of nervous details. Claretie stened through rather easily, hitting the obvious ɔts of actuality.

Born in westerly mid-France in the same year as ıudet (1840), he arrived on the scene in Paris when out eleven. He gradually joined with the Vacquerie : of high-minded, upright men—belated Romantics ıo did not need to reform. They were to help over- :ow the dissipated Empire and to live for the more ;hteous Republic—agnostic and Protestant. And so became a journalist at twenty-one, then editor, iter of almost forgotten plays that ran a hundred ;hts, a universal commentator, breathing only the air ɔm day to day. His books reflect a remarkably full

picture of his time. Every new idea, movement, emotion, thrill of his epoch appear touched up in his thousands of columns.

It is in his popular "La Vie à Paris," more piquant than aggressive, that Claretie reveals himself adequately as a quotidian chronicler. But compare the more distinguished and durable "Vie littéraire" of Anatole France, which easily discovers to view a superior man of books, overshadowing the transient man of journalism in Claretie!

He was too good-hearted to be a great talent in letters. A man of literary genius, it seems, must have something mean or small about him. Claretie was never mean nor small. He had the willing nature of a philanthropist, a very true love of liberty, a frankly welcome soul. And he was respected as he was beloved—a person in whom the difficult public conscience of Paris could always at length repose in confidence. Ever hopeful, confiding, looking for the best in almost all things, he remained to the last a felicitous figure, ready, conciliatory, practical. Everybody's assistant and contributor, he survived the writing of numerous prefaces for friends and the keeping track of his own pseudonyms.

One may crudely say that on the road from Romanticism Claretie became an Impressionist. He first appeared in 1861 before life and letters in the presence of death at the funeral of the young and wasted Murger. It was the end of the old Bohème with its wan, tubercular loves. But Bohemia never had any attraction for Claretie. He was as far from it literarily

in his wholesomeness of nature as he was politically from the régime of the debauched Morny. Claretie's idea of Bohemia was that it lacked passion. He said that Bohemia "is not the love of liberty—it is only the caprice of liberty."

To be an Impressionist, however, was not to be a psychologist, in his case. He readily passed by the difficult descents and ascents of the human soul, leaving them to younger men like Anatole France, Bourget, Barrès, with their more hesitating inclination to look closely about.

Claretie added nothing to liberty, fashions or style. Accordingly, perhaps, he was able to maintain at the Comédie Française, as much as humanly possible, a just balance between the Classic and Romantic and between nearly all the old and nearly all the new. To serve well the notional public, the ever-changing Government Ministries, the sociétaires, the saints and the devil, was the result of a diplomatic acrobatism which he exhibited with an approved skill of equilibrium. It was his great feat to have ridden with victory through all the wars that swept across his reign, and where he always won out with his supremely good tact and good will.

Such a career as an officer of the nation, a functional administrator for half the span of a life time, would have altogether killed the writer in less of an adaptable, industrious and affable littérateur. And to his praise again be it said that such a successfully duplex example is to be found at no time in the past among his distinguished predecessors in the rue Richelieu.

ii. François Coppée

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE was born in Paris in 1842 and lived to the age of 66. Though never strong physically, he produced many plays and poems. He was attached for a while to the Luxembourg and the Théâtre Français libraries, and became a member of the Academy in 1884. He was unmarried, an active Catholic and extremely likable. More than one of his dramas caused disturbances at the theater. Only his stories are read in America. They have a certain popularity but are quite pale beside those of his contemporary Maupassant.

FRANÇOIS COPPÉE

THE death of François Coppée recalled a man always with something white around his throat and always ailing. Whether he was in his library or passing down the street, the impression of his illness was borne in upon one.

He was accustomed to go along the pavement absorbed, stoop-shouldered, his hands behind his back, frequently throwing them out and up in earnest Gallic declamation. At home he declaimed—confidingly proclaimed. In this he seemed a pendant to Sardou, who, likewise a man of the theater, was a great declaimer in his everyday life.

I often thought of Sardou as a millionaire, dwelling up toward the high, wealthy incline of northern Paris, powerful and with a strong fighting hold on existence amid his costly tapestries and antiques. And then of Coppée, living humbly and unwell, away down on the plain of southern Paris, at the end of the indigent art quarter. Fortunately, however, his prolific pen, in his later days, brought him plenty.

He occupied for years, with his sister, a modest one-story house in a lonesome street. You entered a yard where the surroundings gave little intimation of the near presence of one of the best-known littérateurs of France. Like Sardou, Coppée was extremely friendly

in his home. He welcomed every one, was interested in everything. He talked and moved restlessly about in a favorite red smoking jacket which recalled the famous red coat of the Romantic Gautier. There were cats (he was fond of them), cigarettes and abundant examples of the latest forceful slang.

In country inns Coppée was sometimes taken to be a commercial traveler. For he idled about, smoked, and told stories with every one. A sample of his popular kind of fun-making was his account of his laundress who called upon him one evening and finding him absent, left this line: Monsieur, Je suis Venus avec le linge.

In his first poems and tales he reflected the life of the common people living along the southern edges of the Latin and art quarters of Paris. His volume "Les Humbles" made him known as the poet of the Humble. His verse was simple in effect, like his stories. It was written for plain people, and no other writer was then more widely read and beloved by the general French public.

But there appears, also, in his output an aristocratic strain or association, evidencing his cultivation of the nobility. Counts and marquises were fondled with an admiration which did not seem to conflict with his love and cult of the Humble.

He was avowedly Catholic. He became latterly one of the leading defenders of the church in its troublous days in France. He was anti-Republican, anti-Dreyfus. He stood against all that is making French history and progress. He was practically opposed to the larger

and Republican liberties and opportunities of those selfsame humble classes whose virtues he sang of so tenderly, so compassionately.

This conflicting attitude or development appears similar in a way to Brunetière's. For Brunetière grew up as a revolutionary, scientific, intellectual agnostic and evolutionist. Then he suddenly went over to the Catholic church, becoming prominently identified as a worshiper of tradition, of conservatism, of sanctified authority, always harking back to the royalist, aristocratic centuries.

It is strange that though the name of Coppée was among the most *retentissants*—well-known—names in literary France, there exist two mistaken impressions about him. One is that he was a great poet and greatest as a poet. He was in fact, as indicated above, essentially light, weak, fragile, not only as a story writer but as a versifier (except in so far as his plays are verse). He approached neither Verlaine nor Maupassant. He was successful, but he discovered or felt nothing very new or different.

Far more important was he as a dramatist. He wrote effective and most admirable stage pieces, always in verse and lyrical by nature. "Le Passant" and others are little classics. His best drama is "Pour la Couronne." His plays are of a more finished Romanticism than Hugo's. They were companions, in a sense, of Richepin's noble, sonorous dramas in rime, but more feminine. It must be remembered, however, that Coppée, ardent in his views on many public questions, created at times, like Sardou, veritable sensa-

tions on the boards and came into conflict with the political authorities.

The other mistaken impression about Coppée is that he was really a Parnassian. He identified himself with the Parnassians, it is true, and stood classed with them, yet he was nothing but a Romantic. He exhibited none of the leading Parnassian attributes—hard, impeccable virtuosity, adoration of impersonal beauty, fondness for the barbarous Exotic. On the contrary he was intimate, personal, sentimental, emphatically *emotional*—all Romantic qualities. He was a descendant of Hugo. Even his cult of the Humble was born direct from Hugo's verse and prose.

Coppée possessed neither the intellectuality, the ultra-refined sensibilities, the exclusive distinction nor philosophic training of Sully Prudhomme. Nor did he have anything of the mystic and musical mystery and genius of Verlaine, who fathered a school and whose original influence is fertile, fructiferous and increasing. Nor did Coppée display any of the glorious, unfeeling brilliance of Leconte de Lisle.

His fame will not grow. His plays, nevertheless, will remain for no little time a true and living adornment of the Paris stage. Unfortunately they will reach no other, for they lose all in translation.

Coppée's literary product is characterized by amiability, smooth-toned *lyrisme* and expansive generosity. A winning, popular, beloved figure, he appealed in his books to the hearts of men and women. He softened mankind. He left it more justly human through his emotionalism and through a certain simple and direct nobleness.

iii. Coquelin the Elder

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

COQUELIN THE ELDER, the most celebrated of French comedians of the nineteenth century, came from Boulogne. He died in 1909 at the age of 68. When scarcely more than twenty he was in the front rank of players at the Théâtre Français and was called to perform before the emperor and empress. Of a forceful character, he finally broke with the national theater in 1886. He then began organizing dramatic tours and reaped fame and wealth in all European countries. His appearances in America are well remembered.

COQUELIN THE ELDER

IT is by comparison that Coquelin's greatness looms forth. We think of his brother, an excellent comedian, prominent in the second rank. But he faced in the direction of farce while Coquelin the Elder turned always to elegance. The former was a romp, a clown, with his lôge full of pictures of chanticleers in honor of the family name; with his unbuttoned pantomine; with his embodiments of the common idiocy of humankind—the Monsieurs de Pourceaugnac and other amiable imbeciles of Molière. They in turn and betimes transform the fastidious stage, parquet and galleries of the Théâtre Français into a lively circus and "ballet" as in the "Cérémonie," in that ancien pays des femmes et des lavemens—that ancient land of women and purgings.

Or take the case of M. Got as a different comparison. He was the compeer of the elder Coquelin—a comedian of the highest genre possible to officialdom in France. His attainments were entirely solid and meritorious. But he was content for nearly half a century to travel daily back and forth by tram or "hirondelle" from his Passy home to the Comédie, like the most inured and decorated chef de bureau of the Government. He lacked those greater gifts which forced his friend out into life and among humanity as

it is, and his name is little known away from Paris. One of the familiar jests of the Coquelins was apropos of their official-ridden country where "a man without decorations is like a woman without children."

Coquelin owed his eminence in large part to a rare quality in his profession—personal culture. We think of him as a cultivated, talented person outside his art —one not always and forever exemplifying merely the *vis comica*. He could paint some; he was an intelligent connoisseur; he delivered conférences; he wrote books, critiques, essays—one on that most sensitive, most strictly intellectual, most refined of all French poets, Sully Prudhomme. In fact, to speak of Coquelin's love and esteem for the poetry and Lucretian philosophy of Sully Prudhomme, is to signify in a word how sanely mental, delicately sentimental, finely grained he was. And yet he was born in an humble, ignorant baker's family, in the northern tip of France, without advantages.

He was certainly unapproached, the master comedian of his time. Sociétaire of the Comédie Française at twenty-three—unique in the case of a man—he truly outgrew its brilliant but restricted confines in twenty years, and expanded over into the tumultuous, ever-modern realm of the theaters on the grand boulevards and thence into the vast outer world. This was because he possessed the larger virtues of imagination, originality, daring, like his feminine mate Bernhardt. He was as individualistic as he could be in a nation where the ultimate standard is the impersonal.

The able presentation of contrasting views by Henry

Irving and by him in their discussion of the final ideal of the player's art correctly denoted the profound, philosophical difference between the French and Anglo-Saxons on this subject. As Irving placed the individualism of the actor above his part, and therefore above the play, as the typical English (and American) point of view, so Coquelin extolled his own racial ideal of the impersonal: the French conception that the rôle should be greater than the embodier. And it is natural to say that our emphasis on the actor accounts largely for the vast dearth of enduring plays in our Anglo-Saxon world since Shakespeare. In France there are notably playwrights, plays and players; in England and America we have notably stars.

Comedy is, of course, the genius of the French as tragedy is the genius of the British, and Coquelin was wise in not resting his laurels on Molière and the consecrated past. However high Molière stands in the halls of fame—and he cannot well be placed too high, however much, too, we love the man himself for his extremely human and heart-moving life and character—he appears lacking in certain elements of universal growth. He is restricted more and more to the academic. He does not make a wide, practical appeal outward and downward in modern democracy. This may not be due to his limitations perhaps so much as to the fact that France has been reduced from the position of aristocratic dominance to that of a mere nation among equally prominent nations.

The mobility and suavity of Coquelin were found identified, as a result, with a varied multitude of rôles

which he created. He represented, as no other comedian, those two opposite poles of the mimetic art—breadth and exquisiteness. Does an admirer recall him by preference in the social and ethical "Denise"? Or as Labussière in the thunderous "Thermidor"? Or in the gentle and delicious "Monde où l'on s'ennuie"? Or, above all, do we think of him at nearly sixty (when he was officially at the age of honorable retirement and self-consecration to his memories) as adopting and crystallizing the genius of a young and obscure playwright who belonged to a brand-new generation? The world fell promptly in love with Cyrano and Flambeau as Coquelin—all so stirring and magical in the golden chimes of the author's Alexandrines. One can scarcely imagine Rostand without his inspirer and visualiser. What lover of daring variety did not deeply regret this loss in the cast of the too long delayed "Chantecleer"?

Rire et bien dire—to laugh and to recite well—was the characteristic motto in the homes of the Coquelins. Exemplifying their race, they believed with Rabelais that To Laugh is to be Truly a Man. Coquelin did an inestimable service in acquainting foreign peoples with the intimate delights of French comedy of the old classic periods. As a mime he brought corporeally home to other races those perfect pictures of the life and times of that exalted age when civilization looked exclusively to Paris for light.

His tact, bonhomie, easy accessibility were only too well known. He was adored in France despite the fact that there the dividing lines between schools and

cliques, between what is official and what is radical and progressive, are habitually so sharply, so fiercely, drawn. He made and kept friends in all spots of a land where people scarcely hesitate to wound forever those nearest and dearest to them for the sake of a principle in art or literature. Strange as this seems to our Yankee race who take these subjects lukewarmly, not to say chillily, all this is most serious, vital business on the banks of the Seine. It illustrates, in part, how the French strive to exalt the drama by the sacrifice of the individual. And as for what precisely they idealize in comedy, this is nowhere so deftly and compactly signalized as in one of the fine sonnets of Sully Prudhomme, dedicated, as it happens, to Coquelin's brother:

Quel bonheur! n'est-ce pas? de réveiller encore,
En honneur des aïeux, dans le rire gaulois
La gaîté du bon sens qu'un beau verbe décore!

(What joy to awaken again in Gallic laughter, in honor of our ancestors, the gayety of good sense decorated by beautiful words!)

iv. Dumas the Elder

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

DUMAS THE ELDER died in 1870 when 67 years old. He led a tumultuous life as reflected in his stories. To avoid creditors he traveled for years in foreign lands. Three hundred volumes are credited to his pen. His most widely read novels were written between 1843 and 1850. His best literary fame rests in France on his plays which remain live classics and are accepted without reserve by critics. He antedated Victor Hugo on the French Romantic stage.

v. Dumas the Younger

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

THE famous son of the great Dumas was born in 1824 and died in 1895. He first distinguished himself in 1852 with the play "La Dame aux Camélias" which he constructed from his novel of the same name, published in 1848. His long list of excellent dramas are of the social type, representing the manners of his day. They include "Le demi-monde" (1855)—he invented this term; "La femme de Claude" (1873); "Denise" (1885). He entered the Academy in 1874.

DUMAS THE YOUNGER

DUMAS THE YOUNGER—Dumas *fils*—was of only medium height and somewhat portly. At your second glance the negroid was evident in his face—the crinkly hair, the skin swarthy, if not in a pronounced way.

He became the opposite of his father in nearly all respects. The former, by his plays, amassed wealth which he snugly kept together. He led throughout his maturity a conservative, well-ordered existence, being eminently sagacious in his relations with his fellow beings. He lived in becoming luxury, surrounded by fine works of art in which he was a connoisseur.

Dumas was especially devoted to paintings. Some of those he owned he pointed out to me with relish. Having at first eyed me cautiously, seeing that I was interested in French canvases, he led me up his marble staircase to his bedroom to show me there a large handsome nude hanging above his couch. I have forgotten the name of the artist, but the work was in the unrelieved realistic style that prevailed before the days of Impressionism. The picture, of forceful skill, appeared too hard in treatment to be insinuatingly seductive.

Paintings are usually the coins current through whose lore you most easily come to know literary

Frenchmen; and this canvas, in its manner instead of its subject, let in for me much more light on the nature of Dumas the Younger. A sturdy, unappealing, not very communicative, well-rounded character, he was as one held aloof, like this painting, from the view and reach of the general indiscriminating public. He was never expansive nor confiding. He had no airs, cared nothing about attracting attention. On rare occasions only did he appear.

He stood forth, however, as one of the greatest phrase-makers of his half century. Men halted before his wit and sarcasm, keen and trenchant, yet always well-balanced. There was nothing offhand or casual about his use of these weapons. He maturely reasoned out everything he said or did.

As we mounted his stairs Dumas gave me a sample of his humor, though he was more inclined to wit. It happened that a French scientist had just declared that he was about to perfect a method with his chemicals by which children might be born into the world in laboratories in an intelligent, scientific way. The Paris press, as might be expected, were seizing upon this purported discovery with Gallic jibes, developing the promised program with gay deductions.

My host turned to me with a deep twinkle in his eyes and said:

"No matter what the clever scientists may pretend, I think the old-fashioned way of producing children in the home instead of in a factory will always be the most satisfactory and popular."

Dumas maintained the attitude of a social philos-

ther contemplating men and women of class in their terrelations, and setting forth his views and conusions in the form of dramas instead of essays or dactic volumes. One of the foremost dramatists of e nineteenth century, he possessed adept and solid erits and contributed realism and logic to the play. e exerted for forty years a serious and powerful fluence on the French theater, adding to its art conientious and technical truth as well as a masterly ychology as to social conditions and social characters the highest bourgeois classes—those which stand xt to the aristocracy. He sought to unravel comexities or sound deluding depths by a sensible canor, and to show a practical way out through dignified adjustments and compromises.

In the plays of Dumas the Younger there is nearly ways a character who is of a philosophic turn and it of whose lips come forth the duly weighed prouncements of the author himself. His general attide here was to add common sense, practical seemliss and circumspect behavior to the affairs of love. e strove against Romantic passions and Romantic otives among whose tempestuous whirlwinds he had, owever, developed into young manhood. If either e brain or the heart had to be sacrificed, he prosed that the heart be sacrificed in the self-respecting terest of the common weal. After this fashion, unce the wayward Romantics, he grew to be, as an tellectual aristocrat, a convinced moralist and an ithority on the inexhaustible topic of the domestic iangle. In his last twenty years he officiated, as it

were, as an acknowledged arbiter in the social problems of the salon and boudoir. But while always expressing a comfortable and rational philosophy about human existence, his resigned dicta had an astringent tone and through this sprang into being that irony and wit to which we have referred.

Dumas was a playwright with theses usually buttressed by cogent prefaces or pamphlets. He also made use of the press by his infrequent editorials and letters which all Frenchmen read with respect. It was, as indicated, quite the fashion to wait and see what, if anything, Dumas would say as the last word on any subject in his line. As he took more to writing than to the active stage business, his plays, differing from American plays, have great literary quality and are extensively read.

Unlike his father, Dumas was thoroughly a man of Paris. Beyond its confines, or at least those of his own country, his interests did not go. Paris provided a rich enough mine for him, offering him all the materials that his curiosity wished to resolve. One saw him little indeed out of his own intimate circle—his city house and his country house at Marly and the theater where one of his plays might be in rehearsal. The world-wide aspirations of Sardou and Coquelin did not lure him.

Hence, his dramas, while so potent and vital in the history of the French theater, are not often played in other lands. The forms of the problems and situations which they analyze and display are admittedly

French and lose their pertinent values once the fortifications of Paris are passed.

In having in real life an aversion for the advertising interviewer, the professional gossip, the hero-worshiper—thus varying in the extreme from his confrère Sardou—Dumas at the same time manifested in his plays a marked dislike for the prude, the Puritan and those social reformers for whom everything is easy and who propose to change human nature and cure all evils in a day. This was to him hypocritical.

And yet the sympathies of Dumas should not be called inactive. They stood open along rational lines. A reasonable *tolerance* formed the base of his constructive social religion. And yet how strangely different was this from his father's expansive laxity which knew neither standards nor limits!

vi. Judith Gautier

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JUDITH GAUTIER, the talented literary daughter of Théophile Gautier, the celebrated poet, and of Carlotta Grisi, delightful in memories as a ballet queen, was born in 1850. She married the well-known littérateur Catulle Mendès in 1866; was divorced; and married Pierre Loti in 1913. She and Loti collaborated in the play "The Daughter of Heaven," produced in New York. She is an Orientalist, her plays and fiction dealing with Chinese and Japanese subjects.

JUDITH GAUTIER

THE famous daughter of Théophile Gautier received me one afternoon in her modest Paris salon in the rue Washington. I was struck at once by her resemblance to her father—by her powerful physique, by the dead white color of her face, and by a certain plastic grandeur that would tempt the chisel, and which Gautier loved to hew in snowy blocks of stanzas.

She spoke of many things. First, of Japanism, since she was one of its earliest devotees in France. The Goncourts had started the fashion, and, for that matter, the exiled Hugo was always painting and carving distorted and sunny Celestials. But Judith Gautier was the first to translate Yellow romances for French readers, and to prepare a Saffron drama for the Paris stage. This drama, "The Merchant of Smiles," was given at the Odéon in 1888, and was played at Daly's in New York under another title. Her Japanese novel "The Usurper" was awarded a prize by the French Academy in 1875, when the author was twenty-five years old. It is a simple oriental tale along whose way you see sumptuous flowers and emerald colored grass, and hear the susurration of citron-tree groves, and mount white stairs leading to purplish skies.

"My Japanese books have not met with success in

England and America," she said in her echoless voice. "I am told that the English and Americans are interested in the Japanese for their grotesque drollery, whereas I have tried to treat the sad side of their nature. No, I am ashamed to confess it, I have never been in the orient—I live there only in the imagination. Foreign souls arouse my curiosity more than foreign localities—people rather than places. Of late I have been giving myself wholly to theater work—writing plays. It is easy and does not take long stretches of time. The difficulty comes in getting your pieces satisfactorily before the public. I am such a poor combatant—I yield to every one's judgment."

The subject changed to Wagner. Judith Gautier was one of his most intimate friends. "I was born a Wagnerite," she said. "As far back as I can remember, his music was magic to me. I was a mere gamine when first I used to see him at Lucerne. He was pleased to proclaim me as one of his patronesses at Bayreuth. He playfully called me his Valkyria—his Brunhild. I have a casket of letters from him. Ah, if he could have lived a few years more! He had great things yet in store. He told me of the new opera he was meditating. Hindustan was the scene and Buddha was to be introduced. But he had to go—he was very weary—he had suffered so much. No, my book on his poetical work can hardly be found now—it is almost out of print. Baudry made the frontispiece for it—Parsifal. There is the original drawing itself" (indicating a picture on the wall).

My kindly hostess observed that I was stealing a glance at the room. She arose and I followed her as she talked of its various souvenirs and ornaments. Two sides of the salon were lined with one continuous Turkish divan, above which ran a continuous mirror with Turkish cloths grouped along its upper border. Light entered through two stained glass windows. One of them had been painted for Théophile Gautier by a Turk, and the poet's name was in the center of it. "The other window I attempted to make myself in imitation of this one."

There was, opposite, Liszt's photograph embellished with his signature and greetings. And some pictures of my new friend by her American friend Sargent adorned the narrow walls. In one of them she appears as a kind of Madame Chrysanthemum; in another she is seen sitting on the green bank of a brook.

"I have only a pied-à-terre—a mere stopping place—in Paris," she remarked. "I pass most of the year at Dinard. I have there a little brick house that stands right by the edge of the sea—here is a picture of it." She showed me (with the excuse that they were fabulously idealized) some photographs of herself as a Valkyria in magnificent attitudes and with small white Valkyrian wings posing on her black hair. There was an aspect of grandiose humility, of valiant strength, of unconscious appeal, in these goddess pictures—a helpless triumph gleaming at me with probing eyes. Amazing eyes, indeed, were the eyes of my hostess!—those two deep torrid lights of lustrous jet shining

forth from a soul that lived, not in France, but in distant tropics where restless coralline understreams rise and find solace at tranquil ocean surfaces.

You could read behind this calm mien—beneath this mute and static cast of presence which she inherited from her father—that Judith Gautier had known "immortal longings," had tasted of supreme efforts, had been the romantic daughter of a celebrated Romantic poet. And with this you remarked, instead of any hint of formality or parade or extravagances, a noiseless simplicity, a frank modesty, a shrinking confidence —an utter lack of grand manners and social veneer.

Like George Sand's best books, the books of Judith Gautier are written as if for girls and boys. Her "Cruelties of Love," notwithstanding its sensational title, is but a grouping together of four plain, old-fashioned tales of love such as American girls devour at sixteen. There is nothing French about them except the language. The same is true of all her productions: they are exotic to Parisians. I ventured to tell her that her contes were the most like our typical American love stories of any I had ever read in French.

She led the way back to our seats. The name of Goncourt was mentioned. "Oh, I do not feel that the Goncourts are exact," she said. "I do not recognize my father at all as he appears in their pages. They observed things at little corners, and leave you with general and abiding impressions which should have been noted only as exceptional—accidental. If they happened to see you when you had a cold, you would

always have, for their readers, weeping eyes and a strange voice, and, as a result, you would go down in their history as a kind of curious beast."

We talked again of music, of Bayreuth. She described the microscopic care with which she had translated Parsifal word for word into French prose, and suggested that one must be a master of his own language in order to translate well.

As I came away through the low ante-chamber, and down the five flights of stairs, I was thinking, not of Wagner and his Valkyrias, but of austral seas and white, immobile statues—of a yearning soul from the East locked within the placid contours of some pearl and ivory Buddha.

vii. Henry Gréville

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

HENRY GRÉVILLE, pseudonym of MADAME DURAND, died in 1902 at the age of 60. Her many works represent an emotional sensationalism in popular fiction. She lived several years in Russia, returning to Paris in 1872. She visited the United States several times on lecture tours. She was highly accomplished in languages. Her most successful stories are on Russian themes, depicting Slav characters, customs, habits. The best are "Dosia" (1876) and "Sonia" (1877).

HENRY GRÉVILLE

HENRY GRÉVILLE was the literary heiress of George Sand. At least so said Augier, and so said Octave Feuillet; and in so saying they meant the best George Sand: the idyllic George Sand, as in "la Petite Fadette."

The stories of Madame Alice Durand-Gréville have been read far more in our country than those of any other modern French woman—indeed, more than those of any Française of the century save the authors of "la Mare au Diable" and "Corinne." She was, for that matter, known personally to many Americans. In 1885-6 she spent six months in our eastern states, giving lectures in French and English.

Madame Gréville seemed really a type of English womanhood. This may be explained by the fact that she was a Norman of pure blood, Normandy being the connecting link between France and England. Fresh air, sunlight, outdoors in the garden, were the daily subjects in her missal.

Half the year was passed in her country home by the Loire near Angers. From her desk there she could see the sail-spread barks glide picturesquely up and down the river; and there she lived with Nature as George Sand lived in her beloved neighboring province of Berry. To speak closer the truth, Madame

Gréville treated rural life in a more Naturalistic and practical manner than her great romantic predecessor, for the former was an amateur horticulturalist who produced new varieties of flowers, and delighted to dig in the soil with her hands.

Her apartment in Paris was near the Exposition buildings. Here in a modest room, on a table gay with two ornamental lamps and three or four bouquets, and, in mid-winter, before a bright wood fire in a grate, she wrote by the side of an erudite and most amiable companion—her husband. Through the window in front of her, there stretched away, between two rows of houses, a vista of southern, light-streaming sky. Without some such constant view of the infinite, Madame Gréville would have found it perhaps impossible to write in Paris.

Adjoining this room was her salon whose walls were enriched by little Henners and by one or two Pointelin landscapes in the Jura. Facing these paintings hung two precious, hand-embroidered, silk tapestries. In fact everywhere in the apartment were specimens of her tapestry work—a cloth on a mantel, a cover on a footstool. It was when weaving (like Penelope) these patterns that she thought out during the winter season the plans of her next stories. Then in summer they were fashioned mentally into shape among her flowers at Bois-Briou. She was able to average two romances a year because, for one reason, she did not put pen to paper until a book was entirely finished in her head, so that she could readily pass before her inner eye each scene and chapter complete to the smallest detail.

Finally some morning she would sit at her writing table and scribble off manuscript more rapidly than an amanuensis could copy it.

Her books are for the great public, not for critics and dilettants. They are a wholesome variety of, perhaps we may say, the Naturalistic novel. She took Life—Nature—as she saw them before her, and made them the basis of her stories. The study of human character was her main theme. An event in the life of a friend, or an incident read in a newspaper, would suggest the scheme of a tale. She traced in her mind the chain of circumstances and phases of character which could have led up to that event or incident. She thus proceeded backward from a fact—from something that had happened.

And occasionally a friend or an acquaintance was offended, discovering how she had portrayed him truthfully. In a more definite sense, her literature was eminently moral. This explained why her stories found such favor in America: they could be entrusted to young girls for whom it is educationally desirable to have pure and simple fiction in simple and normal French.

Of her seventy volumes, many of which have passed through twenty, thirty, forty editions, Madame Gréville had a particular esteem and affection for "l'Aveu," "Péril," "Nikanor," "Clairefontaine," "Cléopâtre" and "Épreuves de Raïssa." The "Temps" as a rule published one of her novels every two years in its feuilleton. Her Russian fiction always had a special success. She thought the Slav soul inexhaust-

ible in its materials for the romancer. It was Turgenev who introduced her to the Paris editors on her return to France early in the 1870's from Russia where she had lived some time and had married Professor Durand. Still it was not until 1876, the year of George Sand's death, that Madame Gréville obtained a recognition in the French capital, and experienced the pleasure of seeing one of her novels appear in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" while another was appearing in the "Journal des Débats."

Her manual called "The Civil and Moral Instruction of Young Girls" somewhat offended the Roman clergy in Paris. She however regained their favor, and a prelate benevolently remarked on one occasion that she was like an orange tree producing sweet and bitter, perfect and deformed, oranges, but *bound* to produce. Though a Catholic by birth and rearing, she did not follow the formal practices of Catholicism, and was proud to have the wedding service of her daughter performed by a Protestant clergyman in a Protestant church.

Madame Gréville had physical vigor, strength in constant action, clear, frank eyes, fine, white teeth. Notwithstanding her sturdy appearance she had been well-nigh an invalid for a long time. The many hours of ill health which she passed in bed she employed in mentally writing books, in reading musical scores, and in fixing rimes to fancies in order to calm her nerves.

A passionate lover of music, she came near choosing a composer's career instead of a novelist's, and could follow, over the conductor's shoulder, the most difficult

orchestral scores, at least those of Wagner's earlier operas. One day when I called she was reveling in the pleasure of fingering the leaves of a new edition of Schubert which had just been brought in. She was among the first to subscribe for the Lamoureux concerts—that bold enterprise in which Lamoureux risked his large fortune.

She went away from America with the impression that we are always out of doors; just as Americans leave France with the notion that the French live in the street. Her one special and vivid recollection was that of being almost killed by Yankee hospitality and New Jersey mosquitoes. Her opinion of America was, "An enormous force badly directed, but with an immense and glorious future."

Her belief in isolation for literary work furnished one reason why her name seldom appeared in the journals and public places of Paris. She was not, as she used to say laughingly, "a slave of the press" like her dear friend Alphonse Daudet; and declared that the greatest triumph of her life was in marrying her daughter without letting a single newspaper get hold of the fact. While Madame Gréville avoided publicity she was very hospitable. At her Saturdays in the rue de Grenelle you were apt to meet old and young celebrated people—Goncourt and Daudet in their time, Henner, the elder Rosny, the rare Pointelin. Out of her big, kind heart came freely the invitation: "Run down and see us this summer at Bois-Briou. I will show you what a good *cook* I am."

Monsieur Durand was her best literary adviser and

friend. A very modest gentleman, he was most loyally devoted to her service and to her fame. He had given up teaching many years before, and his own province became that of an expert judge of paintings who thought nothing of journeying from one city or town to another far away in order to decide on the original of two disputing canvases.

Of Madame Gréville's poems, written (as indicated above) to pass the hours of ill health and not for publication, one in particular, which she called "Le Départ des Barques" (on the Loire), always exhales for me a delicate, penetrating tenderness worthy of a "vaine tendresse" of Sully Prudhomme. Of its four stanzas—they lie before me in her handwriting as I pen these words—I cannot refrain from quoting the last two as somewhat fitting to the feelings which come in realizing that she too has passed out into the Beyond.

Les barques s'en vont, silhouettes grêles,
On les voit décroître à l'horizon clair.
On s'avise alors qu'elles sont bien frêles,
Un petit frisson a passé dans l'air.

On distingue encor leur forme amoindrie,
Qui s'efface et fuit tout là-bas, là-bas.
On rentre un peu triste, à tout petits pas. . . .
Ainsi nos enfants, quand on les marie.

(The barks float away, slim silhouettes.
We see them blend into the clear horizon.
We realize then what frailty is theirs.
A little shiver has passed in the air.

We still watch their diminishing forms
That fade and flee away, far away,
And we return home a wee-bit sad, with
Little footsteps—as when our children wed.)

viii. Gyp

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

GYP, pseudonym of the COUNTESS DE MARTEL DE JANVILLE, was born in 1850. She traced her lineage as a grand-niece of Mirabeau. She produced one hundred and thirty novels or novelettes in thirty years, and originated those popular characters in Parisian life known as Petit Bob (1882), Paulette (1883) and Loulou (1888). She pictured a semi-dissipated society upon whose flanks she applied the whips of humorous raillery and withering scorn. Her irony flayed many vanities and perversities, yet without anger or bitterness. She became a literary idol of the boulevards, combining the attitudes of an aristocratic lady and a tom-boy with gayety, verve, esprit, vivacity. She stood as a sort of official satirist of French high life, yet a friend of the mob. She knew how to handle risky situations with clever and excusable audacity. Being a master of dialogue, she has been called a modern Lucian in petticoats.

GYP

HER salon was hung in tapestries. A clock pointing at the wrong hour. Pictures everywhere. Among them her portrait by Aublet. And of her daughter a pastel stretching along on a low black satin lounge. A large white porcelain grate with a fire slowly and nobly dying out. Just in front of the grate a gigantic green china frog squatted before a circular sofa. The sofa strewn with illustrated journals, Forain sketches. Crowning its summit a jardinière, in the form of a dragon, wrathfully displayed a coronet of plants. Griffinesque Japan and patient Ethiopia contributed their distorted fantasies and Atlantean feats to the exotic and eccentric spectacle of the salon. The general tone was of a dark green and yellow, everywhere agitated in rapid curves and brusque designs.

The furniture and furnishings gave evidence of use and had for that reason a homelike air. The room was evidently lived in. On the right of the grate a huge fauteuil on rollers opened its arms to the visitor. It was Talleyrand's, and in it on Thursday and Sunday afternoons Anatole France used to sit and visit with his hostess. What tête-à-tête these must have been! On the other side of the grate a Majolica monkey climbed a bell rope. A little back from this

side of the fireplace stood an English folding screen decorated with those famous caricatures of "Bob" which were once exposed at the Bodinière.

Before the folding screen in a yellow fauteuil Gyp would sit in her nervous, unconventional way. Imagine her clad in a loose dress of lemon-colored plush trimmed with white down, a little open at the neck, and a tiny silver bell hanging suspended there against the tegument. And fancy a great brass serpent coiling thrice around her throat.

She was slight and of medium height. It was apparent that to her mind fashion is a stupid convention. No suspicions of powder nor paint nor perfume haunted her presence. Her hair was a dull blond. It was frizzed saucily down over her brow and she now and then brushed it away from her violet-gray eyes. Her face showed that its mistress loved the sun, the wind, the brine of the sea. Doubtless it had never occurred to her to think of being beautiful; but when she smiled, an admirable, adorable expression of sympathy and loyalty endeared her countenance.

While Gyp conversed her hands dashed about, sometimes hovering around her mouth, sometimes drumming nervously on any convenient object. Her hands were those of a worker. They were capable and strong. And what a racing talker! Yet no egotism nor pose nor parade. The furthest possible from all that.

Gyp was a tom-boy whom Aublet's portrait misrepresented as a lady of quality. A romping love of independence was the dominant trait of her personality.

A Breton born in Brittany and reared in the careless Breton way, she was never reconciled to the artificial or affected conventions of society. She adored her horse, her dog, a hair-in-the-breeze isolation.

Circumstances introduced her as a madcap girl into the frivolous court circles of the Second Empire, married her to a count, and associated her, just before 1870, with a demoralized and decaying governing class. Her healthy Breton instincts rescued her from the general French cataclysm. She saw only too clearly the vanity, immorality, ridiculousness of the world about her and revolted without absolutely sundering any liens. She chanced finally to find a vocation in which she could let her vivacious energies prance and gallop. So she became, behind her merciless face-à-main, a disillusioned observer of the sterile and senseless high-life to which she belonged and of which she was not. She grew to be a playful cynic who lightly enlivened her cynicism with infantile caricatures. The special literary form which she adopted was dialogue. And Gyp's dialogues became a distinctive feature of the Paris literature of her day.

Her penchant for caricatures did not interfere with her retaining an aristocratic optimism. She remained a faithful Imperialist who believed that the curse of her country was the Third Republic. As the reign of Napoleon Third was the reign of her own illusioned youth, the imperial past appeared gilded to her as she looked back upon it from the discolored realities of later years. By birth, temperament and tastes she was a democrat with a self-sacrificing affection for the

lowest classes. But she had become an aristocrat by position and profession, and harmonized her popular love of liberty with her Imperialism by believing that the people would be better off under a dynastic régime.

At the commencement of her literary campaign her risquée attention was especially attracted by the dissimulating veils which society throws around mankind as created of God. Her "Petit Bob" represented merely her own boyish frankness and impishness vis-à-vis the follies of the social habits and customs which shameface nature. To her, amid the healthful recreations of her open-air existence, Nature seemed more innocent than all these fictions, and she felt that disgrace and ridicule should fall upon those "civilized" manners and practices which would conceal or distort the natural while freely fostering a half-hidden license.

With the years she came to sketch travesties of that vie mondaine which first amused her chiefly for its own travesties of Nature. With her everything centered in the word chic which characterized a combination of the gallant, the jaunty, the generous and the aristocratic.

With this watchword chic, she valiantly arabesqued a crusade against bogus creeds and parvenu gods. Most characteristic was her "Gens chics" with its slender pages of indecorous dialogue, its colored hobby-horse caricatures of Jews, of ugly people in their robes de nuit, of graceless young women whose limbs seemed poorly affected by the laws of gravitation.

Gyp was the first one, or at least the main one, to introduce into Parisian fiction the modern free girl as

a desirable institution, so to speak. Gyp foreshadowed the New French woman who has promised to revolt against her race's traditional ideas of convent captivity and blind ignorance, ingénues and dots. For she was a revolutionist. This was quite fitting in her as a descendant of the great Mirabeau. But she believed that a great big broom would come into play and the French empire be swept back into power.

"Under the empire," she urged, "there was no misery. To-day what a dreadful state of things! I hate the parliamentarians. I know the men in Clichy and St. Ouen—all those quarters there—I go riding there with my dog. I love the people, the lowest class, the loafers, the tramps and all that. When the time comes they will march down into Paris very gayly—I'm sure of it. I've never been molested in those parts of town, though my coachman did get stoned at St. Ouen one day when I went to give some money to a ragpicker whose rent I pay. But I've never been harmed or approached. What they lack is a leader. I know we would be apt to get hurt—we who are along the edges. I, for example—it's true I'm not rich—but for my part if it comes to that, to be shot dead is not a disagreeable death—it's chic, I think. I've always fancied it on the contrary. I would try my very best to put on a brave face if they were to put me against a wall and shoot me down—with a Rothschild on each side of me."

ix. Jeanne Hugo

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JEANNE HUGO is the daughter of Victor Hugo's elder son, Charles. His widow married Charles Lockroy, prominent in French political life. She married Léon Daudet, the son of Daudet, but they were divorced. As a child she inspired much poetry written by her grandfather whose well-known "l'Art d'être grandpère" had her and her brother as its subjects.

JEANNE HUGO

INDEPENDENT of any incidents or events in her own career, Jeanne Hugo will ever be a part of the Victor Hugo cult—a cult which is overshadowed in France only by that of Napoleon. Who has not read the volume of rimes called "l'Art d'être grandpère"? Hugo's beautiful cradle song commencing:

Jeanne sleeps; she leaves, poor angel banished,

was running in my head as I went one bright freezing February afternoon to pay my respects to her and to her mother who was then Madame Lockroy. The Lockroy mansion stood on the Avenue Victor Hugo, a few doors below the house where the celebrated poet died.

I was ushered into a drawing room where, before long, Madame Lockroy and her attractive daughter greeted me. The latter possessed brimming, translucent eyes in which her grandfather used to find forget-me-nots.

Of course the conversation revolved around the illustrious grandfather as a theme. The walls about us were enriched here and there with his grotesque drawings.

"Yes," said Madame Lockroy enthusiastically, "he

was always making them at Guernsey. He rarely used a brush or paint—he worked with ink and pen, sometimes with a match and a great deal with his thumb. He would usually begin a drawing by dropping a blot of ink on a sheet of paper. Often the form of the blot, with its rays shooting out, suggested his subject—a château in a rainstorm, a church and spire in the twilight, or something of the kind.

"So he developed the sketch, with chance and caprice for his guides. That drawing (pointing to a sketch)—you see brown spots in it—that is coffee. He frequently turned a drop or two of coffee on the inked paper, for he was apt to indulge in this sport when finishing his café noir after breakfast."

"Grandpa was simply angelic to me," said the daughter. "I have none but the happiest memories of him. Nearly all those little incidents versified in 'l'Art d'être grandpère' were true—for instance, the promenades with his two 'marmots' as he called us. Still I was never locked in a dark closet with only dry bread to eat—he invented that story."

You remember the childlike pleasantry which the poet conceived in a certain poem of twenty-four lines. "Jeanne" had been imprisoned in a dark closet because of misconduct. Her grandpa—compassionate soul—was slyly slipping in a jar of preserves to her. He was discovered by one of the law-and-order party of the household and was to undergo a like punishment for this abetting of lawlessness. Whereupon "Jeanne," inspired with sympathetic gratefulness, whispered to him:

"Then *I* will bring *you* some preserves!"

"Grandpa was always very quiet—he rarely laughed. Here is the only photograph in the world that shows him laughing. He never tried to sing or hum or whistle to me, nor did he ever recite poetry. He told me a story occasionally, but no ghost stories—no tales that would frighten me."

"Hauteville House at Guernsey, where we all lived most of the time," added Madame Lockroy, "was said to be haunted, and when our people first went there—early in the 1850's—they became interested in spiritualism. I do not think grandpa ever really believed in it.

"He rose at dawn, poured a pitcher of cold water down his back, swallowed a raw egg, drank some coffee, and then worked till breakfast time—noon. His habits were English rather than French. He did not have much confidence in doctors and medicine, but he had great faith in hygiene and cold water. Afternoons he read his mail, trifled about the house, amused himself with his drawings, and from five to seven he always went for a walk."

Jeanne Hugo will remain one of the most famous of all the maids Victor Hugo sang of in his twenty-five volumes of verse—all those maids whose A B C, he declared in one of his poems to his "Jeanne," "is to have white arms, to be beautiful, to dazzle the depths of the deepest hearts with merely a nothing—a bouquet, a ribbon, a smile—and to be, by the side of morose, ungrateful man, gentler than the azure, rosier than the rose."

x. Jules Lemaître

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JULES LEMAÎTRE died in 1914 when 61 years old. He was of the Impressionist School and a reactionary. He never married. The Academy claimed him in 1895. He wrote many notable volumes of literary criticism in the unconventional Impressionistic manner, and also many plays and stories.

JULES LEMAÎTRE

JULES LEMAÎTRE, the distinguished French littérateur, pretended to be a sort of rustic. He once said to the present writer, "Que voulez-vous? I'm a kind of peasant in reality, I suppose." This came forth in a shy voice, with a long, gentle shrug of his somewhat stooped shoulders, and a pleasant smile as if frankly avowing an undeniable fact.

He was not tall nor slender. His eyes were small, bluish, scintillating. High cheek bones. And, at forty, a short, thin growth of reddish whiskers. His manner, very quiet, somewhat abashed. At first nights he was apt to appear carelessly dressed, his top hat not recently ironed. He seemed to prefer there to efface himself in a corner with some friend and whisper confidences of amusement.

He used to write in an atelier, his face toward the great glass front of a light-flooded apartment spaced by lofty tapestries. He would say, "I like plenty of light." A favorite habit was to walk to and fro there, smoking cigarettes very deliberately. His literary penates were unpretending. In his early period at least, when he might have freely been called a disciple of Renan, a terra cotta bust of that amiable philosopher surveyed the precinct with mild eyes of serene skepticism. On the table where Lemaître wrote he

managed to rescue a small writing space from the encroachments of piled-up books.

Nearby might stand his bicycle, to which he was addicted in his prime. Opening out from the atelier there was a tiny bandbox of a garden, high-walled, with a half dozen trees, in the heart of Paris. In summer he wrote there a good deal. This was a part of his pretended rôle as a son of the soil. "I adore the country." This meant his natal valley of the Loire.

And in fact Lemaître, like Sarcey, Bouguereau, Henner, impressed one as being of the rural districts—plain manners, simple clothing, usually untrimmed beards. Yet—strange revealment of human nature!—nothing of the real country was reflected in their works. Lemaître's literary output, foremostly critical, was refined and difficult to the last boulevard degree of nicety and disquietude. An early leader among the Impressionists, he was at once nonchalant and hard to suit like a fine, spoiled lady who is both generous and unsatisfied. He was about the first in modern Paris to write of contemporaries as seriously and permanently as if they were ancients. He thus dignified the present. And for this he deserved a long mark.

His plays, fiction, poetry, did not succeed. His potency grew into the form of dramatic criticism. Yet the dramatic element was not really in him as his dozen plays attest. His literary temperament was somewhat like that of Anatole France, but the two men were wide apart. The latter had the power and magic touch of genius. Lemaître could only offer a highly

clever and polished talent. He came under the influence of titled aristocracy (understood to be *concretely* feminine) and allied himself with royalty, nobility, Catholicism and all that looks backward in France. His confrère embraced the Republic and looked forward.

This social coefficient contributed to the dual result that Anatole France is a world figure while Lemaître, starting out at the same time in life with equal opportunity and promise, was but a French figure and on the losing side at that. He was so little in touch with the bent of his race that his excursions into politics were like feeble fireworks winding up in a Versailles fountain.

Lemaître was, in short, a man of books, of the study, of subjective analysis, of psychological expertness that tended practically to defeat itself or end in a vacancy. At the same time his influence in Paris was very competent and very considerable. Speaking of vacancy, the word "blanc" was a favorite with him, as indicated perhaps by the titles of his books and plays. And he would have been the first to avow modestly, quizzically, that this word typified his career. For what, he would have said, is "blanc" after all but a blank?

xi. Pierre Loti

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

PIERRE LOTI, pen name of JULIEN VIAUD, was born of a Huguenot family in 1850 and married Judith Gautier in 1913. The Academy received him in 1891. He has passed his life as a naval officer who voyaged extensively in the orient. He is a playwright, but is celebrated as a prolific novelist of exotic life and scenes.

PIERRE LOTI

PIERRE LOTI is a short, slender man. He is very quick, lively, in his movements. This must be harmonized with the silent air of melancholy which envelops his face and characterizes his personality. His look, his aura, are the expression of a profound and hopeless sadness as radical and ineradicable as that of any German philosopher of pessimism.

He has the delicate, quite graceful manners of a woman, as is habitual with Frenchmen. He occupies little space with his motions and movings about. He has a quiet, frail voice. And then there is his famous shyness. He is extremely retiring. He is naturally in a state of hesitation, genuinely more or less abashed. This personal modesty, it will be remembered, explains how he comes by his curious pen name. At the commencement of his career in his nation's navy, the energetic young Julien Viaud was so exceedingly timid that his comrades scornfully called him Loti—the name of a little flower in India which discreetly hides itself. He bravely adopted the name when he published his first book in 1879 at the age of 29.

I well remember his extreme diffidence in the first three or four years when he appeared as a member at the French Academy. It is true he rarely attended,

living far from Paris, and being usually kept wide of the civilized world by his naval duties. He was then a stranger in the French capital, knowing none of the great literary Gauls with whom he had been, almost without notice, called upon to associate among the Forty Immortals. He was not a little affrighted by those solemn, austere scenes in that somber little temple where the French belletristic gods are wont to assemble as on Parnassus. With his hair worn, in revenge, most fiercely in the pompadour style of those days, he would sit solitary and alone in one of the empty rows of consecrated seats, high up at the back in the assembly. He would look alarmed, much as a small squirrel suddenly imprisoned in a cage.

Much curiosity and amusement were, indeed, created in Paris when Pierre Loti was received there at the Academy in 1891 and delivered the customary address on the departed member whose seat he was taking. He had come from the briny waters of southwest France. He had dwelt on the ocean and not on the Paris boulevards. He had sprung quite spontaneously and by himself alone from the sea (could we so appropriately say soil in his case?) of French literature. He was not a creature of salons, nor bred on critics' books, nor learned in the pedantic ways of the banks of the Seine.

Accordingly he approached, at the Academy, the whole difficult heights and "finicky" finish of it all at one most appalling swoop, to speak loosely. And Paris laughed politely in its lace sleeves at this soaring novice

n its very midst. For Loti, in his reception address, howed that he was quite innocently unaware of many nwritten conventional things and open secrets of the iterary existence in Lutetia; and, with a perverse conrariety, he emphasized somewhat elaborately some hings that every one there had known ever since the radle. Paris had thus refreshingly caught up to its erfumed bosom a rare, exotic species, and it was a liversion for a time.

But Loti was very, very clever. Modestly and very rreproachably he soon made the most of everything—f his navy existence, of his museum home down at Rochefort on the sea, and, above all, of his beautiful, ad sentimentality which has always distracted French romen with an irresistible love for his melancholy art nd his melancholy soul. His attractive eyes would, y the way, emphasize this effect with the fair sex. They are his finest feature—pronounced, of a brown emper, large, liquid and innocent as a gazelle's, and ll the more striking because of his smallness of size.

Loti was born in the celebrated French Protestant ity of Rochefort where he has always lived when at ome. He came of a very stiff Protestant family, but e has lost all piousness long ago, if he ever had any. He has no religion whatever. Not only this, but his ooks trouble themselves precious little about what is noral or immoral. They simply go right along unheedingly, like Nature. In this he is the true traditional sailor who has a wife in every port, exemplifying the reputed morals of the wandering sea-life, and

is only moved with profound feelings when he sails out of a beloved harbor which he is not to see again for five years—or ever.

This leads up, in truth, to a curious fact. Loti is distinctly a woman's author, and to such an extent that his books are most widely translated in several tongues, and yet they are bereft of any religious or moral sentiments or aspirations. The literary Loti, with all his blue dreams and his etherealized thoughts, has never tried to make any one better. He seems to have been resolutely determined to leave the world precisely as he found it, only better known.

He early saw service in war, having made the campaign of Tonkin, which incidentally got him in official disgrace for a year. This was caused by his writing to the "Figaro" criticisms of the behavior of the French soldiers in a certain action. Loti has been "captain of vessel" in the navy since 1906. His life on the sea is, of course, the great distinguishing mark of his literary output. Year after year he has sat out upon his ship's deck describing right at hand the marvelous, unpaintable sunrises and sunsets of the tropics and the orient as has no other man in French literature. And in the far off ports he has had months of leisure to describe the strange women of dusky skins whom he frankly loved in French sailor marriage fashion. He approached each of these successive idyls of his heart with an aspect of sadness, and wept with each inamorata in genuine tears of salt when he quitted her harbor. Frankness, gentleness, beauty and lack of any profoundness characterize these pictured

episodes and inventions of his wandering career, his mark of genius lying in his descriptions.

Ideas do not signalize Loti's shelfful of books. He is wanting in intellectuality as he is wanting entirely in humor. He is a poet, a painter, of colors, of sentiment (always of a feminine tournure), of dissolving landscapes and seascapes floating in a wealth of gorgeous hues. He has bathed the whole Levant in the tears of sentimentality. And all the while retrospective regrets at the futility of human existence have served as his conventional excuse. He is thus a latter-day Romantic, representing that phase of French Romanticism which reached out to the orient. Nearly always dealing with impressions, with what is fugitive and fleeting in aspect like his amours, and with what is born and bred of memory and distance, Pierre Loti more narrowly belongs to the Impressionist period of the 1890's, when the *pointillistes* and all such kin abounded in France.

He is a great romancer, the French seeming to consider "Pecheurs d'Islande" (1886) and "Mon frère Yves (1892) as his two best works. Loti is only secondarily a dramatist. His first play—a Huguenot play—was brought out in Paris in 1898. And apropos, being quite familiar with our language, he has done the English race the honor of translating "King Lear" into French, with the aid of a French collaborator. The translation is in prose and very accurately done. It is characteristic of his sad nature that he should have selected the most woe-begone offering in our literature.

But Loti's instinct is descriptive, not dramatic. He

lacks the ramming force, the impact, the strict hard sense of compression necessary to get himself with great success into the straitjackets of the Paris drama, with all its rigid and pitiless rules and regulations. It is true, however, that he has devoted a good deal of attention to the stage in his latter years. He did a Chinese drama, for instance, with Judith Gautier, the handsome daughter of Théophile. And Antoine looked upon him with favor. For that matter, he has that knack that all French writers seem to possess—the knack of somehow being able to write a very good play. The clue is that the race is naturally dramatic.

It is by reason of his romances that Pierre Loti will live—his exotic romances usually of the equatorial lands and realms of the hot eastern suns. His novelettes expressed emotions that were new to the Parisians. He painted the barbaric life as well as the barbaric aspects of oriental countries, waters and forests. He always did this with a large, tender and fluid brush, drenching the scenes well with the odorous dews of poetic longings—distillations that are the fond nourishment and inextinguishable pleasure of sentimental women the world over.

To the degree that M. Viaud is a woman's writer, he is not a man's author. Men generally do not care for his books. He is too gracile, too feminine, too slender. He is out of touch with the big harsh brutalities which most men have to be acquainted with; yet since we have spoken the word—is there or is there not brutality in Loti's works? There has always been an argument about this, or about the precise nature

of his brutality. Loti certainly does present a brutality to the world in his pages. There is a great deal of the pitiless, of the hardened, of the unheeding. But it is a woman's kind of brutality, not a man's. It is negative rather than positive; negligent rather than active. His Madame Chrysanthemums and his Madame Prunes, with their toyish names, impress one but lightly as with life in a boudoir. To hurt their feelings or harm their lives would seem only something like abusing the existence of a butterfly.

The peculiarity of the frank unconcerned sensuality in Loti's books—so often autobiographic—is, in fact, that he never idealizes love and he never brutalizes it. What makes them generally so acceptable notwithstanding their tropical unconventionality and their free airs of the high seas, is their beautiful style. He is a true French artist. It is his manner, not his matter, which entices. He has a rare and irresistible charm. Under it and back of it are his extremely live sensibilities and an imagination that delights to revel in the sensuously lovely. He has painted over and over again glorious and fragrant universes of color and feeling that nearly all of us can only dream of and shall never see.

xii. Rosita Mauri

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ROSITA MAURI, born in Spain in 1856, was for twenty years, beginning in 1879, the leading star in the Paris Opera ballet. She made her début at the age of ten and danced on most of the great continental stages. She came to Paris under the auspices of Gounod. She was the most skillful dancer de caractère of her time. She later became an Officer of Public Instruction under the Government.

ROSITA MAURI

MADEMOISELLE MAURI was the leading ballerine in Paris, and she held this title for two decades!

Presidents of the Republic came and went; a score of ministries rose into power and fell from grace; countless singers and players had their day and disappeared from view in the horizons of the past; but the Mauri shone on as the one star of the first magnitude in the constellation of the Grand Opera ballet. Seeing her execute the Breton jig in "la Korrigane" of Widor, you understood one reason for her long reign. It was the perfection of brilliant and expert dancing as practiced and displayed in that last generation of the nineteenth century.

I used to drop in occasionally on Mademoiselle Mauri when I was making a little study of ballet music with Vazquez at the Opera. She lived up four flights, just by the rear entrance of the Opera. An enraged rat terrier, with a deafening bark, always met me at the door. I would be shown into the bluish reception room where two fauteuils, facing each other as if in a conversational mood, stood before a closed grate. Or I would be ushered into the Louis XV salon where the chairs and sofas were dressed in white frocks. Sometimes the Mauri would come in abun-

dantly wrapped in a white shawl or a nubia in the attempt to discourage the attack of a violent cold. In such an amiable plight, her rectangular face alone would be visible among her encircling draperies.

She was ever in a hurry and always sat on the edge of her chair. But she chatted most frankly and freely of her art, and gave voice to decided opinions about the decadence of the ballet, the lack of male professors of the dance, and so on. If you were to ask her what is to be the ballet of the future, she would perhaps imitate the humorous Auber by replying, "That which is danced the longest."

She appeared, on an average, twice a month at the Grand Opera. She received an annual salary of forty-five thousand francs with a month's leave of absence in July or August. Her vacation was usually passed at her country-place near Salis-de-Béarn between Bayonne and Pau, or at some watering place where baccara is played. It may be said, though, that while she loved the complications of baccara, she never was able to comprehend the pooling arrangements under which French horse races are run.

Still, withal, she seemed economical and thrifty. She lived in Paris in a modest noiseless fashion. She wrote to you on inexpensive note paper, and, following the example of Fanny Elssler and other great ballerines, she fell into casual and charming misunderstandings with French orthography.

She spoke French with a strong accent, for she was Spanish, having been born near Barcelona. Her father was a master of ballet. She had just the form for a

famous danseuse—ample legs and a light body. Her black hair was worn short and frizzed, and was *sillé* at the left side. On the nights of her "premières" she drank seven or eight cups of black coffee. A sentimental Parisian chronicler once augured that she would fly from earth at the setting of the sun on a summer's day.

The Mauri offered three emphatic traits of character. There was her energy. She was indefatigable in rehearsing her rôles, and invariably exhausted her professor and colleagues by the numberless repetitions of her pas. Then, she had a temper of her own, and was said to rule the hosts at the Opera. When her displeasure was aroused during a rehearsal, she appeared to be transformed into a kind of gale, and swept through the flies and across the stage like one of her native *solanos*. At the same time she had the reputation of being charitable with her purse, and she always spoke well of her companions. As a result, one never heard an ill or a jealous word of her.

xiii. Frédéric Mistral

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL died in 1914 at the age of 84. He passed his life in his native south of France and was the leader of the Provençal revival. He aided in founding the Society of Félibres in 1854. They became, in 1876, an extended organization with him as chief. His most widely known production was "Mirèio" (1859) from which was taken the libretto for Gounod's opera "Mireille" (1864). MISTRAL was the author of an immense dictionary of Provençal tongues, reviving the idiom of the thirteenth century. The Nobel prize for poetry came to him in 1904.

FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL

ON Sabbath afternoons in the simple village of Maillane, where Frédéric Mistral was born, lived and died, there were wont to promenade up and down the public thoroughfare two columns of people. The one on the left wore deep blue cravats and represented those daring modern fellows who were the radicals and free-thinkers. The other column, on the right, comprised those adhering to the ancient ideas of the throne and the altar. They wore cravats of light blue.

Mistral was to be found among those wearing the light blue. He was thus true to his wonderful thirteenth century when the Troubadours reigned with their graces and weaknesses, their romances and superstitions, their perennial youth and early decay. In fact Mistral and his followers set up a real kingdom of letters, sanctified by rites, glorified by festivals, and crowned with toasts of beflowered rhetoric and rimes in praise of that lovely dead Provençal past of which they were the direct inheritors. Theirs was a knightly round table out in plein air, graced with roses and love, embellished with sunshine and wine, with gay laughter and simple faith, in a realm where elderly men exuberantly married young wives.

Successive Queens of the Félibres also reigned—

women so good to look upon that they appear always to be chosen for their pulchritude—lustrous midnights in their hair, unfathomable depths in their soft black eyes. And the first of them was Mistral's young wife, to whom he was married at forty-six.

His appearance brought to mind some Southern colonel. He had the emotionalism and lounging ways of our own warm South. His soft hat tossed on across his right ear, his martial mustache, his lordly goatee, his skin tanned by a thousand suns, his hospitable enthusiasm, suggested a grandee of royal girth and spacious manners, ready to burst forth in expansive mirth or quickly to shed a confiding and sympathetic tear.

Much has been written to show his hilarity and frolicsomeness, especially at the time when Daudet visited their adored Provence. They and their fellows, bearded, loose-limbed, with the jaunty swagger of their warm clime, carried on "high jinks" amid the home folk up and down the river valley. They played pranks, shouted and laughed, absorbed much wine, and reveled in the tales and jests of their boasted locality.

Some conceive of Mistral as a literary aristocrat and Overlord, dwelling in a home rich and beautiful with art objects suggesting the romantic days of Aucassin and Nicolette. They picture him as a luxurious esthete and master dilettant able to linger for months over an archaic rime and toy for years over the memories of a decayed language and literature that had appeared dancing in a few light-hearted pages of history.

Others are led to think of Mistral as a rustic true to his peasant mother, and living in a cottage containing two rooms, one above the other, and companioned by that poor man's friend—a dog.

Though he was king of the southern half of France —the most famous and beloved man there—he pretended in fact to be a sort of clodhopper. In his village, not far from the medieval Avignon, of royal and papal memories, he was contented for a long lifetime to receive the homages of the world. No well-educated person thought a visit to that province complete without having paid his very welcome respects to the Chief of the Félibres. Citizens of distant America even were numbered in his circle of personal interests. He dedicated a poem to President Roosevelt, and included Richard Watson Gilder among the acknowledged friends of his Society. On Mistral's tomb, built at Arles in 1907, the face of Roosevelt is one of the faces carved in the marble.

Modest in his life of provincial triumphs, Mistral seemed to have been born under a lucky star. His evenly modeled hands were spoken of as indicating his tranquil life. Good of heart, manly, he had the full leisure to love all that was noble and beautiful. Having fallen heir to sufficient means from his farmer father, he was always free from economic pressure and could thus slowly do a worthy work that would have been impossible to those of the pen who see the prowling wolf whenever they peek out of doors.

To labor twenty years, eight hours a day, on a production as little salable as a Provençal dictionary,

though unique and valued as it is, required an assured ease of purse. This toil of love, picking up fragments of one's ancient native idiom from fisher folk and old housewives at their daily tasks, demanded an occupied, gossiping idleness such as belonged only to a loquacious Félibre. With a dallying beauty and simpleness could he write: "If joy comes not to-day, assuredly it will come to-morrow. And as soon as the violet breathes her perfume, the butterfly will flutter to her; then will the maiden, like a ripening fruit, come to her lover; and the crystal dewdrop will be as radiant as a diamond."

The crowning of his literary fame was precisely his early poem "Mirèio" (1859), from which came forth the libretto for Gounod's famous opera of "Mireille." One may well say that it is the most popular opera comique in France save "Carmen" and "Mignon." One of the toasts drunk by the Society of Félibres was: "I drink to Mireille, the most beautiful mirror in which Provence looks at herself."

Only a few times did the king of the Provençals leave his white, sun-baked roads and the vineyard shores of his gallant river Rhone. A trip to Switzerland, one to Italy, a few rare journeys to Paris as an uncrowned rustic ruler in that great republic of letters—these sojourns but attested to the loyal devotion and local pride with which he insisted on dwelling firmly at home. Logical in his pride of provincial attitude, he declined to become one of the Immortal Forty on principle. All that was too far away—in Paris.

While it is to be recorded that he succeeded in a highly enviable measure, he at the same time failed in part. Though his literary labors were of undeniable profit and permanence, his career did not swerve the great main modern course of French literature. Instead of dipping back toward Provençal forms and fashions as Mistral might have wished, it showed decided signs of a contrary bent, leaning rather to the contemporary kingdom of slang and tramp philosophy, as witness Richepin's "la Chanson des gueux." The Troubadours were royal tramps, but the latter-day Weary Willies are the hobos of a democracy concerning which Mistral had small understanding and sympathy. With all his exuberant tendencies that belong to his "boiling South," he had a grave and phlegmatic side, and could expatiate at length on the sadness and shame of present times. His unfriendliness to modernity was shown by his favoring the use of the guillotine and disfavoring the modern ascendancy of feminism which appeared to mean to him the descent toward effeminacy.

Mistral—last of the veritable Troubadours—was truly gifted in that he was an erudite philologist who possessed a rare creative sense of poetic form. His name had become greater than any direct appeal of the output of his pen; for only to the learned few does the bent of his labors mean anything. It was to the credit of this not ungrateful or ungenerous age that he reaped all the rewards of fame from a public which understood practically nothing of his work. While he humbly pushed away scholastic honors from himself,

they only crowded the more thickly about his brow. The very nature of his undertaking disarmed criticism. There was none of his compatriots who really cared to say him nay, though he persisted in not using the national language except in translating his own books.

He fairly earned his share of the Nobel prize in 1904, with the proceeds of which he founded a Provençal museum at Arles. A few months before his death he appropriately wrote: "The days that grow chill and the swelling sea—all things tell me that the winter of my life has come, and that I must without delay gather my olives and offer the virgin oil on the altar of God."

xiv. Georges Pellissier

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

GEORGES PELLISSIER was born in 1852 and died during the war period. He was a valuable literary critic whose life was hidden in his analytical volumes. He violently attacked Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright.

GEORGES PELLISSIER

WHEN chatting with Alphonse Daudet one morning, the name of Pellissier was mentioned. Daudet, noticing that I appeared to be acquainted with Pellissier, said:

"Let me tell you what I guess about him, for I do not know him and I know no one who does. I merely judge from his article on 'la Petite Paroisse,' but I'm pretty sure I am right. He is a Protestant or, at least, of a Protestant family—his father may be, or may have been, a pastor. You see there was a certain taste of stringent morality biting that article. I don't mean that I think M. Pellissier is orthodox: I mean an enfranchised, liberal Protestant. I fancy he lives alone, works alone, mixes little with the world, that he tries to escape personal influences, prejudices, and entanglements in order to be perfectly just as a literary appreciator amid the silence of books instead of the noise of the public.

"He is not after favors and is prodigal of none. He expects severe consideration, and does not wish to be chary of encouragement. Honesty, rationalism, humaneness—those are about his guiding words. And another thing—he is not chauvinistic. In general, our French literary censors are not familiar with other modern countries and literatures, and consciously or

unconsciously look down on them. Not so, M. Pellissier. Some influence or circumstance in his life—I don't know what—has opened him up to a sort of cosmopolitan forbearance—to an international clemency of view. Now—how near right am I?"

Daudet guessed correctly in outline. Pellissier's father was a venerable Protestant pastor on the left bank of the Seine. The family was deistically religious and strongly Republican. Consequently the son was reared abreast of the best commanding influences (not essentially Catholic) which have slowly shaped the destinies of France to-day under the Third Republic. He was of that excellent class of Parisian people who read the "Temps" and the "Journal des Débats" and applaud the plays of Augier. He married a Prussian lady who was educated in Paris. German as well as French was used currently by his children, although Pellissier only spoke his native tongue. In this way his cosmopolitanism, which Daudet remarked, may be accounted for.

Pellissier used to be at home in the silent depths of Passy just on the verge of the Bois de Boulogne. He lived nearly opposite where Brunetière lived before the latter took his apartments in the rue de Rennes to be near the "Revue des Deux Mondes" and the Sorbonne. Pellissier shunned society and companionship save that of his family and his bicycle. He divorced himself from his confrères, the theater, public galleries, salons—Paris, in a word; for he believed that a literary critic needs to know books, not careers, personalities, gossip. From analogous motives he never at-

tempted verse, playmaking, fiction, or general, non-literary subjects. Alone of all his contemporary French reviewers, he was first and last a critic of letters. He did not parade, courted no external ambitions, hid his life, and tried to keep the lives of his confrères hidden—even from himself. He had refused a chair at the Sorbonne because he felt that there was a certain "snobisme," as he expressed it to me, in its atmosphere.

His maiden duties as a professor of rhetoric were exercised at Fontenay-aux-Roses—that well-known village south of Paris. Here he wrote his first book—the standard one that gave him at once a high reputation: "Le Mouvement littéraire aux XIX. siècle."

I used to have the privilege of slipping to Passy on the train and talking with Pellissier about books of the day. He would sit in beslippered ease and smoke cigarettes in a slightly nervous manner while formulating literary judgments in the conversational French style. He conversed, as he wrote, with a sober strictness of expression, firm, direct and above all logical—few figures of speech, little imagery and color. His aim was the truth, rational, moral, piercing, contracting truth, not rounding beauty, not expanding indulgences or insinuating entertainment. Trenchant was he and lucid, strengthening and sincere. This is what you do not ask of Parisian reviewers as a rule. He preferred to be serious rather than conspicuous at the risk of being frivolous or misleading.

XV. Edouard Rod

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

EDOUARD ROD (pronounced rode) was born in Switzerland in 1857 and died in 1910. He lived latterly in Paris. He was an editor, professor of comparative literature, novelist and critic. He lectured in America in 1899. He took up early with Schopenhauer's pessimism and Wagner's music and published many volumes. He was a serious contemplator and examiner of anxious problems concerning the soul and human destiny.

EDOUARD ROD

EDOUARD ROD lived in company with ideas. Life came to him second-handed. His existence was neutralized into his classroom, his study, his indoctrinations. His personality was not original, diversified nor piquant. It was sane, regular and praiseworthy even to commonplaceness. There were no pegs on which to hang one's human interest.

On the only occasion I ever met him he was afflicted with a severe cold. He was bundled up, stuffed up, blinked up. Letters and life seemed through his eyes and feelings to be clogged up, barred off or at any rate dammed. As often as I have thought of him since, that impression has revived and I have always associated stuffiness and uncomfortableness with his literary legacy and outlook. This may illustrate the defect or danger of Sainte-Beuve's medium of personality in estimating the output of an author.

This trivial incident of Monsieur Rod's rheum, however, chances to fit in, in a way, with his innate and incurable pessimism. Yet his pessimism seemed rather a sort of indigestion of the very good things of earth. Success and prosperity were the *plats* from which he partook at the banquet of life, and still he could not but ask constantly, Why eat? Why enjoy? Why live?

Far lighter and pleasanter than his quasi masters

Schopenhauer and Leopardi, he was of plainer, more substantial stuff than the typical Parisian skeptics of his day. One need not look to him for any disconsolate force, intensity, isolated grandeur nor, on the other hand, for any Pyrrhonic brilliancy and irony. He was never an ironist, though he belonged to the little circle of pungent jesters in the sanctum of the "Journal des Débats." In truth he was a genuine professor rather than a genuine literary man, and most truly belonged with Brunetière, Faguet and the others in the gray, somber, doctrinal portals of the "Revue des Deux Mondes."

Born and reared on the banks of the azure Leman with his face toward both Germany and France, Monsieur Rod finally decided to be French. In preferring not to develop the exotic within him, and thus not to add a distinctly new segment of horizon to the realm of French letters, he may have missed his greatest opportunity. If he had held himself aloof from and discussed Paris in his volumes as he held himself aloof from and discussed his theses, he might have originated a more valuable and entertaining work.

His hybrid nature partly explains that certain sterility which nearly always marks his ideas, impulses and productions. For instance, he neutralized the Calvinistic element within him by believing, like a royalist Frenchman, that the Holy See is on the whole sufficiently representative and reformative. If one had objected in the presence of Monsieur Rod to the effacement of the individual in the uniformity of Romanism, he would have responded by objecting to the per-

sonal wranglings rife in the individualistic Protestant parishes such as he was familiar with in his cherished canton of Vaud.

His stories are to be distinguished from the usual French novel by the fact that they are "clean"; yet, highly alive to the moral demands of the Protestant races, he was under the impression, as he told me, that the "immorality" of his fiction was the reason why it had not found a foothold in England and America. As for his own attitude toward religion, he would *believe,* but *could not*—like almost every psychologist of the Renan group. He was a "Calvinist free thinker."

His pronounced consciousness of *moi,* the source or sign of his as well as of all pessimism, was neither exaggerated, eccentric nor ailing. It was intellectual dilettantism. His débuts in literature were extremely Naturalistic, but he soon revolted against Zola and willingly classified himself with Bourget and Barrès. He was legitimately the truest son of Goethe to be found in the family of contemporary French authors. He characterized Goethe as the father of modern dilettantism, and indicated himself when he defined a *goethéen* as one who is "above all intelligent or . . . comprehensive" because he embraces subjects rather than penetrates them, interests himself in everything for the purpose of enjoying all his faculties, yet gives himself wholly to nothing;—who is, in brief, largely tolerant and sympathetic because he is indifferent.

Thus Monsieur Rod's dilettanism—his rather plethoric, after-dinner indolence and indifference—as-

sumed the guise of intellectual luxury. Now and then he exclaimed against such a fate: "Ah, thrice cursed is he who has touched the damned dilettantism!" But the die was cast and nothing was left to him except to make the most of it. And that he did with very good grace, for that matter. After all, like his own Michel Teissier, he loved his ailment.

Monsieur Rod was born in 1857, and studied at Berne and Berlin and at the Sorbonne. His belletristic career was divided between Paris and Geneva. He resided for quite a time on the slopes of the Seine at Auteuil where in his salon on Sunday afternoons one could meet many of the literary celebrities of France. He was a rather large man, fine looking, polished in manner, companionable. His voice was very soft and pleasant, and he had talents as a conférencier. He never liked teaching and apparently cared little for the title of erudite. He studied seriously many varied subjects such as Wagner's estheticism, contemporary Italian literature, Pre-Raphaelitism; yet he did not permit these exotic chiaroscuros and perspectives to enrich and beautify the grisaille pages of his fiction.

xvi. Rosny the Elder

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ROSNY THE ELDER is the literary name of JOSEPH HENRI BOËX with whom his younger brother Justin collaborated under the combined name of J.-H. ROSNY. He is a Naturalistic novelist who was born in Brussels, lived in London, then settled in Paris. He is a member of the Goncourt Academy. His fiction portrays Socialism, the Salvation Army and kindred themes, dealing with the life of the poor and the laboring classes. He opposed the extreme Realism of Zola. Rosny is not given to detail. He is interested mainly in effective but uncomplicated presentations of characters and subjects.

ROSNY THE ELDER

TAKEN altogether Rosny is, in his manner, didactic with tolerance, digressive while being characteristically logical and lucid, concentrated and precise without closing to the future or the possible any of the windows of his soul.

It was at a little soirée of M. Durand, the husband of Henry Gréville, that I met the elder Rosny. I had taken him for a college professor as I noticed him conversing, in an earnest, absorbed, strenuous way, across the room. His black beard and hair contrasted with the dead pallor of his skin; he had the erudite stoop; he wore that unhealthy air which comes from a congestion of study. In venturing to chat with him later in the evening, I confirmed his instructing, persuasive manner in talking, and his care in being perfectly clear. He uses English well, for he long lived in London, and married an English lady.

When I went into the refreshment room at M. Durand's, the fragmentary conversation was displaying *couleurs de rose,* as is natural under such circumstances, and Rosny was beginning: "I am an optimist because" —but, unfortunately, he was interrupted at this point by incomers who inadvertently silenced the sentence. I, for one, was sorry at the time not to learn Rosny's reasons for his optimism, since it was the fashion with

the younger literary Frenchmen of the epoch to be dyed in, or tinctured with, pessimism.

It happened that I came downstairs with him that night in the rue de Grenelle. I saw him wrap himself thickly in his overcoat and turn south on his way to his home in the rue Didot through the empty, lonesome streets of southwest Paris—off toward the Pasteur Institute and among the anarchists (now ex-anarchists) whom Rosny had studied so carefully. I should have feared this journey at such a late hour, for there were ruffians in that homely, half-despairing quarter of the city.

Rosny wrote in collaboration with a junior brother, and their fiction was put forth under the style of J.-H. Rosny. Personally they did not court publicity. No photograph of them was to be found anywhere, and their names were rarely mentioned in the press.

Two or three weeks afterward, Rosny the Elder honored me by a call one evening. He told us of the story he was writing about the invisible beings that, he fancied, live among us on this planet, rub shoulders with us, and exist for one another and not for us, as we exist for one another and not for them—a sort of Xipéhuz.

I was tempted to ask him who had written the best essay on the Rosny novels. "M. Pellissier," he replied. "His essay is, on the whole, just. It notes my real defects as a writer and appreciates my good points. But—I don't know why it is or should be so—the critics take too long to say a little. At least it seems so to me. And then they are apt to magnify your short-

ɔmings and minimize your commendable qualities. hey will remark, 'He is not a bad fellow and does editable work,' in one paragraph, and then detail ıd enlarge upon your failings in ten paragraphs. his leaves inevitably a disproportioned, and there- ɪre unfair, impression in the mind of the reader."

Rosny thought that the ancient classics and the Louis IV classics assume too important a rôle in French lucation and in French civilization. For him, France too *universitaire*. He was forced, as a boy, to read ıly French books of the 17th century. There were ɔ others in his father's library.

In spite of himself, Rosny is discursive in his con- ɪrsation and oral discussions. He is often obliged force himself to return to his subject, and this leaves m visibly dissatisfied that the hours are so short and ɔrds so exclusive and imperfect. For his brain teems ith ideas and conceits, and with the most recently certained or adopted facts in many branches of ıowledge. Each suggestion awakes a thousand other ggestions in his mind; each fancy points to a thou- nd other fancies across his vision.

He longs to give voice to it all—to delve, to roam, explore, to soar; but Time is ever nudging his elbow d he must hurry away to whatever narrow task he ppens to have in hand. Rosny is one of the few eat Frenchmen I ever met who are manifestly rushed something like our American fashion—never begin- ıg, never ending, never really halting.

As my lamplight shone on his face from my study ble that evening, I watched his wide eyes and his

bloodless, intellectual face. It is very broad at the temples, in indication, I suppose, of his comprehensive mind. He has a way of smacking his lips a little—drawing them together and apart—as he attempts to express exactly his thought.

One afternoon a month later, he sent me a copy of "l'Autre Femme." I read it the same day. In it the two brother analysts deal with Woman from the French standpoint still (i. e., husband, wife and mistress), but with the fact in view that the Teutonic races are the most aggressive and prolific and yet tend to monogamy.

This novel is a firm, transparent, psychological study of the terrible moral effect of a *liaison* on the lover, his wife and their children. The subject is the ménage of the wife, and not that of the mistress as is the rule in Parisian fiction. The erring lover is, in this case, an intelligent, serious man who finds his monogamic instinct at war with his polygamous instinct. In his endeavor to reason to a valid and self-satisfying conclusion, he inevitably fails, and falls back on the traditional argument which he recognizes as stupid—namely, "the right of man because he is a man." This volume is a modest link in the modern evolution of the monogamic impulse in French literature.

xvii. Victorien Sardou

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

VICTORIEN SARDOU died in 1908 at the age of 77. He entered the Academy in 1878. He would likely be called the most celebrated and influential dramatist of modern times, Ibsen excepted.

VICTORIEN SARDOU

SARDOU was *une vraie ficelle*—a wise fox. Madame Bernhardt was likewise one. Indeed they were the most grand and conspicuous examples of their time. It would be hard to say which could have called the turn on the other in a real contest. But, in fact, through all the wars and scrimmages of the drama and theater in Paris, they remained splendid friends. I certainly felt a bit eerie one day when he suddenly inquired, "Do you know how Sarah's toothache is that she had on Thursday?" To have seen her and him rehearsing together must have been a sight for the gods.

A familiar view of him by the public was to be had when he was driven through the streets on the way to or from a rehearsal along the sumptuous, gloomy façades of the Louvre, his top hat tilted on the back of his head, a white neckerchief trying to stifle him, his arm reaching out now and then in a dramatic reach to give combativeness to the subject in hand.

Sardou was one of the very few international Frenchmen. He was a cosmopolitan. He somehow always belonged to the imperial reign—the Second Empire. He had an ambitious outlook toward the outer and greater world, like the Napoleons. Magnificent size, loud trumpetings, the power and grandeur

which dazzle and win the vast common multitudes, the *gloire* together with something of its ever-sounding emptiness—this was reflected, reëchoed, in the showy plays of the later Sardou. He antedated the Third Republic and was not strictly of it or with it.

It was a fine treat to see him sweeping down his study, thundering against the modern régime—"je vais les embêter!—vous allez voir!"—"I am going to stump them—you will see!" He was a militant general, a grand agitator, a vehement partisan. He was nevertheless the variety of bourgeois who always looks back to Louis Philippe. Amazingly expansive in his sudden confidences (for he was a southerner), he would send you the next day one of his undecipherable notes suggesting that you do not happen to mention the matter in hand to any one interested.

No one, of course, has done so much as Sardou to glorify the drama by costly spectacles shining with a wealth of historical details. He had a genius and conscience about stage accuracy, truthful reproduction. He was methodical and tireless. The amount of time and effort he expended on the topic of the French Revolution, for instance, was extreme. I once saw his Robespierre data. It was fatiguing to contemplate. He had countless drawers containing everything he could find on every dramatic subject he could hear of in the world.

A wealthy connoisseur, an alert observer, an expert collector, he was however not strictly a student. He was an excellent business man, shrewd, strongly executive. If you were two or three minutes late, the door

was inexorably closed. You would have to return the next day. He had fifty definite plays rampant in his mind, each greater or more important than the others. He had a hundred projects which he was driving forward like an imperator. Energy, adaptability, the most clever resourcefulness, unequaled experience—every one knows he combined all in the highest degree. The effect on the emotions of the public in a theater—he had reduced all that to an absolute science with no one to dispute with him about it. He knew just when and where the average spectator would have to clamp himself to his seat in order not to hit the ceiling.

Sardou was an accomplished actor, though he was never on the stage. As in the case of Madame Bernhardt, the best acting he did was going on constantly, every day, in the strictly domestic side of his life. A young American woman once happened to overhear that I was going to see him the next morning. She was "dying" to meet him. Would I not take her? I did, feeling that he would not take exception. As we were leaving his study, he took her hand to say good-by. He put his other palm over both hands and turned to me with the air of a conquered admirer, courtier, and downright friend, admitting, "What beautiful eyes she has!" It was a perfect little piece of stage business and coquetry.

My young unmarried friend was swept off her feet. She bounded down the boulevard as if a King had proposed to her. "Just think of it!" she kept exclaiming. "I shall be able to tell my *grandchildren* that the great Sardou told their grandmother she had beautiful

eyes." I have always thought that incident turned her to the stage, for she had never dreamed of the theater as a profession. At any rate, she became one of our conspicuous actresses.

Sardou was truly a great and worthy man. He wrote plays of many different and lasting kinds. We are apt to think only of his large and sometimes doubtful sensations in which it was partly his object to épater le monde—dumfound mankind. We are apt to forget that no play touches the true patriotic French heart more direct than "Patrie" (1869), and no home play continues more pleasantly popular among the best bourgeois classes in France than "Nos Intimes" (1861). If we consider the theater in general as it was in 1860 and as it is to-day, has any one, if we except Ibsen, had anything like Sardou's influence upon its developments?

THE END

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